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A HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE CHRISTIAN
"KERYGMA - ITS FORM AND CONTENT

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the
Southern California School of Theology

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Religion

by
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This paper reports the results of research, study, and analysis of the Good News of the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ, as revealed in the sermons of the Christian Church originating in critical periods of its life, and in basic documents of the New Testament and Patristic Periods.

The Problem. It is hoped that this historical study of the Christian Kerygma will provide new insights to the hermeneutical problem which is presently the subject of emphasis and concern in contemporary theology. The Gospel is understood to be communication from God to man, and Christians affirm that this message is of ultimate significance for all men everywhere and in all of history. Now this message, whatever its content and characteristics may be, must be carried by human messengers, received by human creatures, and couched in human thought-forms and language. Thus the efficacy of God's communication is limited by the very human capacities with which we were endowed by our Creator.

And this constitutes the hermeneutical problem - for how may the message which was received with power in first-century Palestine, couched in its peculiar thought-forms, language, and world-view, be translated in power to first-century Greece, second-century Rome, third-century Gaul, fourth-century Africa, fifth-century Britain down through the ages to twentieth century America?

All forms of communication require power in one shape or another. All that this word "power" points to and represents is crucial for an understanding of our problem. The Greek word is *δυναμις*, and it finds wide usage in the New Testament appearing one hundred and twenty-one times in its noun form. We find it used in reference to God's power (Matt. 22:29; Mark 12:24; Luke 22:69), the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:14; Acts 1:8; Rom. 15:13), the power to work wonders (Matt. 14:2; Mark 6:14; Gal. 3:5), and true strength in contrast to mere word or appearance (ICor. 4:19; Thess. 1:5; II Tim. 3:5). This latter usage and understanding bears particularly on our problem. Paul contrasts mere "talk" with power when he says, "But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. For the Kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power (ICor. 4:19-20); and then he clearly distinguishes between "word" and "word in power" when he

says, "...for our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction" (1Thess. 1:5).

Obviously "power" makes a significant difference, in fact it is for Paul essential to the proclaiming and hearing of the true gospel. Thus, the gospel which he proclaims is not mere talk, mere words, an empty vessel, a bare structure; rather it comes with power, true strength that people may indeed hear it and be convicted by it.

A Basic Presupposition. As a basic presupposition then from which we might proceed with this work, we hold that as a result of the crucifixion of a Jewish prophet, rabbi, and religious sect leader, Jesus of Nazareth, a new religion came into being which initiated the proclamation of salvation from the same God of the Hebrews who previously had revealed Himself and his plan through Moses and the Law. The proclaiming of this new message of salvation was made with power, for it was received, heard and convicted people of its truth and promise. Though this message was new, it came to life in a particular place and time in history. It found a place in the reality of this world as understood at that particular time and place, and in so doing it was of necessity appropriate to, and in harmony with the culture, the language, the thought-forms and the world view it found at its birth. It was

proclaimed and received with power, for it was heard, understood, and believed.

Statement of Intent. It is this message then, the Christian kerygma, which is to be the subject of this paper. We will attempt to trace its progress through the history of the Christian Church discovering, if possible, its form and content, and thereby, its significance and meaning to those who have proclaimed it in significant periods of the Church's life. The Christian preacher in accepting the task of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to his time, assumes the responsibility to interpret it, explain it, translate it in such a manner that it might be heard by his people. This is the function of preaching. Accordingly we will be primarily concerned with sermonic sources, but in addition we will draw upon basic New Testament and Patristic documents for insights to the meaning of the kerygma as proclaimed, and as revealed in the organizational and sacramental structures of the church. Thus, we turn first to the Apostolic Traditions contained in the New Testament.

CHAPTER II

THE MESSENGER AND THE MESSAGE

In many ways the tradition of the Christian Church has pointed to and affirmed the primacy of the apostolic witness and authority for the life and mission of Christ's church. In Creed, in canonical gospels, in worship and liturgy, in teaching, in church administration and rule, the apostolate is cited as the instrumental authority and source of knowledge for faith and practice. Who were the apostles, and what constituted the apostolic office?

I. APOSTLES AND APOSTLESHIP

Walter Bauer's Greek Lexicon, English translation,¹ cites the several forms, meanings and usage of the term as follows:

1. ἀποστέλλω (verb) to send away or out, particularly in connection with the sending out of the disciples by Jesus (Matt. 10:5; Mark 3:14; Luke 9:2; John 4:38; 17:18).
2. ἀπόστολος, οἱ ἀπόστολοι (noun) apostle, the apostles. A group of highly honored believers who had a special function. esp. of the 12 apostles, οἱ δώδεκα α. (Matt. 10:2; Mark 3:14 v.1.; Luke 22:14; cf. 6:13; 9:10; 17:5; Acts 1:26).

¹
Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 98-99.

ἀποστολή

apostleship, office of an apostle;
used especially by Paul to designate
his position (1Cor. 9:2; Gal. 2:8;
Rom. 1:5).

Evidence from Mark

The understanding of an apostle as one sent out or commissioned by Jesus to perform a specific function is well founded in the tradition pointed to in the Synoptic Gospels. The narrative found in Mark 3:13-19 (par. Matt. 10:1-4; Luke 6:12-16) states that Jesus appointed twelve of his disciples to a special place and function, namely, to be with him, to be sent out to preach, and to have authority or power to cast out demons. Here we find Mark citing an older tradition using an authentic list of names, but he does not identify "the twelve" as οἱ δώδεκα. Vincent Taylor holds that Mark is using historical tradition for this narrative; however from its sparseness he believes that it does not represent an eye-witness report, and he gives Mark credit for not adding details and elaborations to the story just for the sake of rounding it out.² It would seem then that at the time Mark was writing his gospel (A.D. 60-70), the tradition had not as yet "hardened" to a specific understanding or definition of the office of apostle.

2

Vincent Taylor, The Gospel According to St. Mark
(London: Macmillan, 1963), p. 229.

It is interesting to note the variant reading for Mark 3:14 which adds the phrase, "whom also he named apostles" in an apparent attempt to modernize the text to the "new" understanding that the twelve are to be identified as "the Apostles" in a formal sense as is found in Luke 6:13.³

Mark picks up the story describing the work or mission of "the Twelve" in 6:7-13, and there we find that they preached for repentance, they cast out demons, and healed the sick by anointing with oil. Thus, their preaching was accompanied by signs of power or authority which was a gift from Jesus at their commissioning.⁴

Mark uses the term "the Apostles" only once, when he ties together the stories in 6:35-56 with the account of the "Mission of the Twelve" as follows:

The apostles returned to Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught (6:30).

Taylor believes that this usage may only be a stylistic variation to avoid confusion with the reference to the disciples of John the Baptist in verse 29. This verse,

³
The clause is added by: S B C*Δ Θ W fam 13 28 238 543 sy^{hl} mg sa bo aeth geo'; is omitted by A C² D L et. al. fam. 1 33 565 579 700 892 1071 al. pler. it vg sy^s pe hl geo² arm, with Taylor, Nestle, and RSV.

⁴
cf. James M. Robinson, The Problem of History in Mark (Naperville, Ill.: Allenson, 1957), p. 49-50

which is undoubtedly Marcan is most significant in that.
 it indicates the kind of work which came to be associated
 with this title.⁵ Specifically, this work consisted of
 "doing and teaching", or in reference to 3:14 and 6:7,
 "exorcism and preaching". Further, it is clear that their
 commission, authority, direction, and substance of their
 work is understood to be derived directly from Jesus.

Most authorities agree that Mark's gospel was
 written in the decade between A.D. 60-70, by which time the
 term οἱ ἀπόστολοι was apparently well known as
 witnessed by Paul's usage of the term. This would point to
 the primitive character of Mark's tradition and sources.⁶
 It is conspicuously absent in Mark 3:14-19 where he names
 the twelve whom Jesus has appointed.

Evidence from Luke

Luke, in his handling of this Marcan passage provides
 additional insight into the development of a "hardened"
 understanding of the term οἱ ἀπόστολοι to mean "the
 Twelve". He is most precise in his definition; "And when

⁵
 Taylor, op. cit., p. 319. "In Mark the name is not
 an official title as in the Acts and the Pauline Epistles.
 It appears to mean "the missionaries"; ...Apparently, Mark
 uses the name because he has just used οἱ μαθηταί of
 the disciples of John (6:29). He does not use it again of
 the disciples of Jesus, but continues to employ οἱ μαθ-
 ηταί and οἱ δώδεκα .

⁶
Ibid.

9

it was day, he called his disciples, and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles" (6:13). He omits from this position in his gospel Mark's account of their function, reserving it for the narrative describing the sending out of the twelve (Luke, 9:1-6). Thus it is for Luke that the apostles receive their authority and power to do the evangelistic task at the time they are sent out, and not at their appointment. The task they had been commissioned to do according to Luke was "to preach the kingdom of God" (or in 9:6, "preaching the gospel") and "to heal" (9:2). It is clear that the power and authority granted to them by Jesus enabled them to exorcise demons and to heal all sorts of diseases, but seemingly not as a guarantee to the truth and urgency of the message they were proclaiming. Hence we may assume from the Synoptic accounts that the preaching of the kingdom of God (or gospel) went hand-in-hand with exorcism and healing, and that the power of the preaching to convert its hearers was dependent upon exorcism and healing.

Now Luke maintains his strict definition of apostle in the Acts of the Apostles.⁷ In the first chapter Luke clearly repeats the pattern already established in his gospel by the earthly Lord when the resurrected Lord again commissions them i.e., the twelve, to a specific task,

⁷
Hans Conzelmann, The Theology of St. Luke (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), p. 47.

"and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth", and at the same time grants them the gift of power now identified with the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). Thus, the commission to apostleship is renewed, and according to Luke this direct commissioning by Jesus is restricted to the twelve. With the loss of Judas Iscariot from this band, Luke again establishes his definition by including the narrative concerning the election of Mattias (1:15-26), in order that the twelve might be renewed.

This narrative about Mattias is also important because of the additional information it provides us regarding the nature of the apostolate. After appealing to Old Testament prophecy and its fulfillment, Luke has Peter explain, primarily directed to the readers of Acts rather than Peter's audience, what one must and can expect from an apostle.⁸ These requirements are:

1. he must have been associated with the eleven and with Jesus from the time of his baptism by John until his ascension (1:21-22a);
2. hence he was an eye-witness to his resurrection (1:22b);
3. he was chosen by the resurrected Lord (1:24).

8

Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, "The Election of Mattias - Acts 1:15ff", Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation - Essays in Honor of Otto A. Piper, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), p. 179.

11

So, Haenchen explains, according to Rengstorf, that Luke's usage of this narrative is meant to stress the historical significance of the apostolate in order that the church of Luke's day (100-120 A.D.) might know that "it has in the apostles the reliable guarantors of the truth of her preaching".⁹

Rengstorf sees the inclusion of this narrative as a means of demonstrating "the true meaning of the twelve in terms of the mode in which this group was constituted. It was Jesus, of his own free will, who chose a smaller group out of a larger number of disciples. Jesus himself limited this smaller group to twelve. Jesus appointed the Twelve to do his own work with him and under his command; for this purpose he gave them the necessary authority, and in this way he made them his scheluchim or apostles."¹⁰

So Rengstorf emphasizes the historical grounding of the apostolate in an event in the life of the earthly Lord. However, in his article on "apostles" in Kittel's Theological Dictionary, he says that the basis for understanding the apostolate "cannot be anything other than encounter with the risen Lord and reception of the

⁹
Ibid.

¹⁰
Ibid., p. 183.

commission from Him personally".

11

12

Evidence from Paul

Paul seems to concur with this latter understanding with these words:

Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord (1Cor. 9:1-2).

Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God (1Cor. 15:8-9).

For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:11-12).

Thus, Paul bases his claim to apostleship on his encounter with the risen Lord from whom he received the true gospel. Here we can recognize Paul substituting the revelation of the gospel directly from the risen Lord for the requirement of being with Jesus during his early ministry. Certainly this kind of direct instruction from the Lord would be equivalent to the authority of "the Twelve" who were with Jesus of Nazareth. As added evidence to support his claim, Paul points to the reality of the

11

Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, "Apostles" in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964-) I, 422. However, it is the opinion of James M. Robinson that this represents "the older view", and that we should be open to new insights regarding this qualification for apostleship.

existence of the Christian church at Corinth as objective proof of the power of "his" gospel.

Here then we can detect in Paul's understanding of the apostle's power or authority a shift from the power to cast out demons and to heal diseases, to the power to convert pagans and establish Christian communities. This is the evidence of the truth, efficacy, and power of "his" gospel, which is utterly dependent upon the divine power, "and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (ICor. 2:4-5).

This is a most significant development in understanding of apostleship for it points to the importance of preaching in the early church under the authority and direction of apostles. Further, this shift to a more sophisticated manifestation of "power" lends weight to Taylor's view that Mark is dependent upon early primitive sources for his description of the work of "the Twelve".¹²

Summary

According to Luke there are three basic qualifications for apostleship. They are:

¹²

Cf. Supra, pg. 6.

1. An apostle must have been a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth from the time of his baptism by John until his death.
2. He must have been an eye-witness to his resurrection, i.e., one who was with him during the period of time from his resurrection to his ascension.
3. He was chosen or commissioned to be an apostle by the resurrected or heavenly Lord.

The second of these qualifications is self-evident, for it is essential to the witness of the fundamental, core belief of this "new" Christian religion, i.e., the kerygma. However, the first is equally important, for the historical problem of the primitive church was the identification of the man, Jesus of Nazareth with the resurrected One who reigns as the heavenly Lord. And it seems appropriate that those men having a personal relationship with both the earthly Jesus and the heavenly Lord could best qualify as expert witnesses to this truth. Luke expresses it this way:

And their eyes were opened and they recognized him (Luke 24:31).

These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you (Luke 24:44).

So James M. Robinson explains,

"He whose encounter with Jesus corresponds to that of the early church recognizes no difference between the historical Jesus and the heavenly Lord...the heavenly Lord is the earthly Jesus as encountered by the Christian ...the 'historical Jesus' is the earthly Jesus encountered as the heavenly Lord."¹³

¹³

James M. Robinson, "A Theological Study of Jesus."

It is this identity which is crucial for the Christian faith and which is embodied in the doctrines of Incarnation and Resurrection.

The third requirement of specific commissioning by the risen Lord corresponds to the gift of power or authority, which in the synoptic Gospels took the form of healing and casting out demons, and in Pauline sources was evidenced by the successful evangelizing mission. This commission with power can only be made by Jesus, and it was understood by the primitive church as a specific one granted to specific people. Rengstorf says:

The risen Lord does not now appoint His representatives merely for a limited span but for the whole period of unknown duration. Yet, He makes only the one appointment and therefore it is only logical that the apostolate should be limited to the first generation, and should not become an ecclesiastical office.¹⁴

Thus it was this concept of the apostleship which provided the church with the guarantee that the gospel proclaimed by the apostolic church was the true gospel stemming from an historic apostolate whose members not only preached the "good news", but who were in themselves a part of the message because of their personal involvement with its author and source, Jesus Christ. So Luke witnesses to the need for such a foundation from which the church might

¹⁴

Rengstorf, "Apostles", p. 432.

move ahead into the future confident of its mission and message.

It was this apostolic preaching, validated, by the authority granted to the apostles by the heavenly Lord which was passed on to new "messengers" for safe-keeping and transmission to the world. And these new "messengers" constituted an ecclesiastical office - that which according to Rengstorf, the apostles could not be - the office of bishop. We will return to this subject again in the next chapter after first considering the apostolic message, i.e., the kerygma.

II. THE APOSTOLIC MESSAGE - THE KERYGMA

Karl Barth in his exegetical study of Matt. 28:16-20, confirms our understanding of the apostles as the witnesses to Jesus' life and resurrection entrusted with the task of "making disciples", and this trust is given to the apostles alone.¹⁵ Further, he understands this passage along with Matt. 10 to be witnesses to the founding, through Jesus' word, of the apostolic Church. He says:

This apostolic Church, existing not for itself, but "for Christ", on behalf of him is the decisive event of the eschaton that has broken into time. The existence of the new community does not consist only in the apostles preaching of the Gospel and their fellow men's

¹⁵

Karl Barth, "An Exegetical Study of Matt. 28:16-20," The Theology of the Christian Mission (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), p. 69.

listening, It is constantly renewed as the listeners themselves become 'apostolic' and, as new disciples begin to proclaim the good news.¹⁶

The Primitive Kerygma

What then is this "good news"? What is this apostolic preaching and what is it that is preached? We will be using the technical term "kerygma" in this paper, understood to mean the content of the proclaimed saving message as developed and preached by the primitive church. We shall use the common term "preaching" or "to preach" as the act of proclaiming the "kerygma" by one who has been authorized to do so, first the apostles themselves, and then by those fully within the apostolic tradition.

The New Testament term κήρυγμα refers to the activity of the ancient herald, and as such can mean either the act of proclaiming or the content of the proclamation.¹⁷ "For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach (κήρυγματος) to save those who believe...but we preach (κηρύσσομεν) Christ crucified" (ICor. 1:21,22). Here, Paul uses the term in both its

¹⁶

Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁷

Bauer, Op. cit. p. 432.

meanings as the content and the act,¹⁸ and at the same time he has succinctly described the kerygma as "Christ crucified".

Baird points out that κήρυγμα is used less than ten times in the New Testament, whereas εὐαγγέλιον, which is¹⁹ practically synonymous with it, appears over seventy times. Robinson explains that the usage of the term "kerygma" in the New Testament is rare, "hence it did not become a technical term like "gospel", and the nature of the New Testament "kerygma" cannot be derived from the term but only from an analysis of preaching in the primitive²⁰ church".

C. H. Dodd, in his classical book on this subject, clearly states the fundamental importance of the kerygma to the Christian tradition when he says:

We are not to think of the records in the Gospels as the ultimate raw material out of which the Preaching was

18

Cf. James M. Robinson, A New Quest of the Historical Jesus (London: SCM Press, 1959), p. 41, footnote no. 2 for detailed discussion of this passage and point.

19

William Baird, "What is the Kerygma? A Study of ICor. 15:3-8 and Gal. 1:11-17", Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXVI (1957), 184.

20

James M. Robinson, "Preaching", Dictionary of the Bible, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), p. 790.

constructed. The Kerygma is primary, and it acted as a preservative of the tradition which conveyed the facts.²¹

Dodd discovered a primitive kerygma preserved in the speeches in Acts, and from the first four which Luke attributed to Peter (2:14-36, 2:38-39, 3:12-26, 4:8-12), he constructed a pattern or outline of its form and content which he submits is the "kerygma of the Church at Jerusalem at an early period".²²

Dodd is indebted to the work of Bultmann and Dibelius of the "Formgeschichte school", for Dibelius in his basic work identifies the kerygma with preaching Jesus Christ as opposed to preaching having the Kingdom of God as its subject and concern. He locates it in Acts 2:22ff,²³ 3:13ff, 10:37ff, 13:23ff. Further, Dibelius states that the Sitz im Leben, i.e., the life-setting, for the primitive traditions was the preaching of earliest Christianity in all its forms, missionary, catechetical and apologetical.²⁴

²¹ C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and its Development (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1944), p. 55.

²² Dodd, op. cit., p. 21.

²³ Martin Dibelius, From Tradition to Gospel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), p. 17.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 15ff.

Thus, through the use of form-criticism as an effective tool to study the traditions constituting the writings of the New Testament, the passages containing the primitive kerygma have been opened up for us. Robinson is in basic agreement with Dodd and Dibelius but he has expanded the list to include both the Lukan and the Pauline sources. He identifies the following:

1. Lukan sources:

Acts 2:22-24;	32-36	5:30-32
3:13-15;	19-21	10:36-43
4:10		13:23-33

2. Pauline sources:

(a) Early Hymns

Phil. 2:6-11	Col. 1:15-20
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(b) Confessions

ICor. 12:3	Rom. 10:9
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(c) Creedal formulas

Rom. 1:3f.	I Cor. 8:6
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(d) Other traditions

1. Explicitly -	ICor. 11:23ff; 15:3ff
2. Tacitly -	Rom. 3:24f; 4:24f; 8:32f.

In order to grasp an understanding of the form and content of the primitive kerygma as we find it in both the Lukan and Pauline sources cited above, we have first carefully studied the sources in Acts, singly and collectively, seeking to hear the message as it has been preserved for us. From this study a number of key concepts emerged which

seem to possess a certain inner relatedness and form which we can identify as the primitive kerygma.

After identifying these concepts or segments of the kerygma as they emerged from the Acts' passages, we rephrased them as questions, and confronted the Pauline sources with them. In this manner a comparison of the two basic kerygmatic sources was obtained.

The Kerygma in Luke

1. It is clear that this message was intended for a Jewish audience for Israel is being addressed directly in each speech except in the story about Cornelius, and here the context implies a Jewish setting. These forms are used: "men of Israel" (2:22, 3:12, 13:16), "Rulers of the people and elders" (4:8), "the council and all the senate of Israel" (5:21).

2. The kerygma concerns an act of God, the very same God whom Israel knows as "the God of our Fathers" (5:30), or "the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob" (3:13). This action is according to His "definite plan and foreknowledge" (2:23, 13:27), and is the fulfillment of His promise to redeem Israel (2:34-35; 3:21; 13:23).

3. He acted through this man Jesus of Nazareth, His servant (3:13), attested to the people of Israel with mighty works and wonders (2:23), whom He sent to Israel as bearer of "the word", preaching the good news of peace

(10:36). "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power" (10:38).

4. The ministry of preaching and healing by this historical man, Jesus of Nazareth took place in all of Judea beginning "after the baptism which John preached" (10:37; 13:25). The apostles were witnesses to all that he did (13:31).

5. The people and rulers of Jerusalem, i.e., the Jews crucified him (2:23; 3:14-15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:39; 13:27-28); they failed to recognize him (13:27).

6. But God raised him from the dead (2:24; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30); and in this great act God has fulfilled His promise to the Fathers (13:33). He has made this man Jesus "both Lord and Christ", (2:36) "exalted at the right hand of God" (2:32).

7. The truth of the kerygma is attested to by the fact that the apostles were witnesses to both the earthly ministry of Jesus (10:39) and to his resurrection (2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:41; 13:31). In 4:10 Peter attributes the healing of the sick man to the power and authority of the risen Lord. Thus it is that the apostles can preach and heal with power, for they have been commissioned to their task by the exalted Christ, "And he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that he is the one ordained by God to be judge of the living and the dead" (10:42), which is to say that he is Israel's long awaited Messiah.

8. His work or mission as Judge and Savior is to give "repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins" (5:31), and those who repent by turning to Him, believing in Him will receive forgiveness of sins (10:43). "Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old" (3:19-21).

9. The desired or expected response on the part of the people hearing this message is faith. Faith in the God of their Fathers who is present with them as he was with Moses and the people of old is the response expected from the kerygma, and it is made manifest in baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit (2:38-40; 8:12, 15-17, 35-38; 10:43, 48). Further, healing is evidence of faith (3:16; 4:10).

Since Dodd's critical analysis of the "kerygma" which is present in the Acts' "speeches", many scholars have presented their interpretation of its form and content. Baird has performed a good service for us in bringing these various sources together.

What are some of the conclusions we can draw from the above analysis? First, that the primitive kerygma came into being in a Jewish milieu, and is fully dependent upon the Jewish culture and religion for meaning and relevance.

Secondly, it is Yahweh, the God of the Fathers who is the central figure and the object of faith for this kerygma. It is Yahweh who acts in power to redeem Israel, His chosen people, through His servant Jesus of Nazareth by raising him from the dead and exalting him as the Christ to rule in power over Israel. Thus, the core of the kerygma, the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, is the ultimate sign given to Israel of Yahweh's continued presence (Acts 3:19) and His fulfilling of the promises made to the Fathers. Accordingly, we can identify this kerygma as Palestinian in form and content.

Thirdly, repentance was the appropriate response for the sons of Israel in their hearing and recognition of the reality of this great saving event described by the kerygma. Repentance understood as a turning around or turning back to the faith of Abraham and the religion of Moses. A new "time of refreshing" (Acts 3:19) was at hand which marks the advent of the messianic age of Israel when the righteous ones of Israel will be recognized and vindicated

before the rulers of all the nations of the world.

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Johannes Weiss cites Luke's usage of Old Testament prophecies and proof texts in his gospel as evidence of the strong Messianic expectation held by the Jewish Christians:

...that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he swore to our Father Abraham, to grant us that we being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.
(Luke 1:71-75; cf. Ps. 18:1-3; 92:10-11; 132:17-18)

Finally, the primitive kerygma was proclaimed and heard with power, for it spoke directly to the times, the people and their needs in form and content which could be heard, understood and accepted. It was a "fitting" kerygma, dependent upon and limited by human potential and power, and based on the view of reality commonly held by the Near Eastern and Mediterranean peoples during this period.

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Bultmann helps us understand the meaning of the concept, Messiah when he says: "The ancient title "Messiah", once expressing Israelitic national hope, was no longer confined to this narrower meaning but could just as well be transferred to the heavenly salvation-bringer awaited by the apocalyptic, as the salvation to be brought by the latter could, vice versa, take on nationalistic traits". Rudolph Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), I, 52-3.

29

Johannes Weiss, Earliest Christianity (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959), I, 32-33.

30

Cf. Hans Jonas, The Gnostic Religion (Boston: Bea-

The Kerygma in Paul

The kerygma in the Pauline sources emerged in this manner:

1. To whom is the message proclaimed?

Phil. 2:10 - "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth." All mankind is to hear - this is a universal message.

Col. 1:16 - "all things were created through him and for him", - all men are involved in this creation and are subject to the sovereignty of God.

I Cor. 12:3; Rom. 10:9 - "...Jesus is Lord." The evidence seems to weigh in favor of a Hellenistic Sitz im Leben for this title, and carrying the same inclusiveness as above, i.e., "the Lord of all".³¹

Rom. 1:5-6 - "...to bring about obedience to the faith for the sake of his name among all the Gentiles, including yourselves..."

I Cor. 11:23 - The words of institution for the Eucharist which Paul used were formed in Hellenistic surroundings for use in Greek-speaking congregations.

con Press, 1963), p. 31, "With regard to the environment in which Christianity originated the recently discovered Dead Sea Scrolls, have added powerful support to the view, reasonably certain before, that Palestine was seething with eschatological (i.e., salvational) movements and that the emergence of the Christian sect was anything but an isolated incident", Also refer to Frederick C. Grant, Hellenistic Religions (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1953), pp. xv, xxxvi.

31

Cf. Bultmann, op. cit., p. 51; also Vernon H. Neufeld, The Earliest Christian Confessions (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1963), p. 56; Vincent Taylor, The Names of Jesus (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1953) p. 51; F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, The Beginnings of Christianity (London: Macmillan, 1920), pt. 1, I, 408-417.

Jeremias suggests that Paul received this formula from the Church at Antioch about A.D. 40.³²

Obviously Paul himself is addressing Greek-speaking congregations, but in addition it appears reasonable to conclude that the traditions he received and used were developed within the Gentile-Christian church for the purpose of addressing the Gentile world.

2. What can be said concerning the identity of God?

There is only one reference to the Jewish God in the sources cited above, and even that one is an indirect one. It occurs when Paul identifies Jesus Christ as both a son of David and the Son of God (Rom. 1:3-4). The sonship of Jesus and the fatherhood of God are the fundamental identifications made in the tradition here represented. It appears in this form in practically all of the sources;

Phil. 2:11 - "...to the glory of God the Father."

Col. 1:15 - "He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation."

Rom. 1:4 - "...and designated Son of God."

I Cor. 8:6 - "yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist."

Rom. 8:32 - "He who did not spare his own Son..."

32

Joachim Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), p. 131.

Frederick C. Grant states that:

...the growing religiousness of the age and its widespread individualism made possible the further importation and spread of many new cults, met the requirements of the age for individual salvation, for revelation and redemption, for divine grace. In general, they were dualistic and promised to save man out of this present life; they were likewise in general monotheistic - the god of the cult was either the supreme deity, or the consort, or the loyal friend of the supreme god;³³

According to our sources then, the God who has acted in and through Jesus Christ is the one God, the same God who has been worshipped in many diverse ways, but who is really the true God responsible for all reality. And the twin concepts of fatherhood and sonship would find ready hearing and acceptance in the Gentile world, if Grant's insight is correct. Thus, a hermeneutical step has been affected, for God is now identified as the one universal God, who is Father of all creation and of all man-kind as opposed to his identity as Yahweh, the God of Israel.³⁴

3. What is the relationship of Jesus to God? As we discovered above, Jesus is acclaimed to be the Son of God, but more, he is the pre-temporal Son who "was in the form of God" (Phil. 2:6), who "is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation" (Col. 1:15),

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Grant, op. cit., p. xxxv.

³⁴

Cf. H. W. Montefiore, "God as Father in the Synoptic Gospels, New Testament Studies, III, 1 (Nov. 1956), 32-33 who says: "that the concept of the fatherhood of God referring to paternity, that is, God regarded as re-

"through whom are all things and through whom we exist" (I Cor. 8:6). This contrasts sharply with the Palestinian kerygma which identified Jesus as God's servant or agent "attested to the people of Israel by God with mighty works and wonders" (Acts 2:22). Jesus, in this Hellenistic kerygma, is attested to the people through the natural world and all that it contains, including man, for all creation owes its existence to the God-man, Jesus Christ.

4. What is the importance of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ? We find no reference at all in our sources to the work of Jesus in Judea and Jerusalem during his earthly ministry. We must conclude therefore, that the eternal Son took on flesh and became man only to be humbled and crushed and crucified. He came to die. Further, this utter degradation and humiliation was essential to and one with his exaltation and glorification as Lord and Redeemer (Phil. 2:6-11; Col. 1:20; I Cor. 15:3; Rom. 1:4, 3:25, 4:24, 8:32).³⁵ Accordingly, the details of his life and work appear to be quite meaningless as far as the kerygma is concerned.

sponsible for the existence of all men; general providence and paternal relationship finds more typical expression within Hellenistic religion, and it is interesting that they are used only in those Jewish writings which were written for and in the Hellenistic world."

³⁵

Cf. Robinson, A New Quest..., p. 122 for discussion of this humiliation-exaltation pattern.

5. Who killed Jesus and why? Interestingly enough no one is accused of being guilty of deicide. It is to be attributed to the mystery and the miracle of God's decision to redeem man. The death of Jesus is one with his resurrection and both are essential to the efficacy of God's action. The initiative belongs to God and Jesus Christ, the eternal Son who "being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil. 2:8); "that Christ died for our sins in accordance with scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3b); "whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood" (Rom. 3:25); "who was put to death for our trespasses..." (Rom. 4:24).

6. What is the "good news" of the kerygma? As in the Palestinian kerygma the central proclamation is the resurrection from the dead of the crucified Jesus Christ, but now we hear a different emphasis or understanding of what God has intended for man in His mighty act of raising Jesus Christ from the dead. The switch from community to individual salvation has taken place. The movement from a kerygma for a covenanted people redeemed as a people has been accomplished, and the "new" kerygma is proclaimed to the individual who may respond to it on his own. And in the appeal to the individual, salvation and redemption is proclaimed in terms of man's resurrection from the dead. Man, he who believes that God has indeed raised Jesus from

the dead, is enabled to confess him as Lord, and therein lies salvation, "because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom. 10:9).

Thus, the kerygma had been freed from the limitations of a particular people, a special religion, a known heritage, for it had been translated into a message which could speak to anyone in the Hellenistic milieu. And according to Grant's evaluation of the religious expectations of this age the requirement of individual salvation was fully met with this shift in meaning of the kerygma to the promise of eternal life. For escape from the dead end of this present world was now a real possibility for "he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead" (Col. 1:18), "who indeed intercedes for us" (Rom. 8:34), "who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (Rom. 4:24), and "if Christ has not been raised then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (I Cor. 15:12).

7. What is the witness or the proof of this saving kerygma? The authority of eye witness testimony to the resurrection, including Paul's own encounter with the heavenly Lord, is found in only one of the sources

(I Cor. 15:5-8), and it may not have been a part of the tradition which Paul received.³⁷ Rather the proof must rest with the power and activity of the Holy Spirit who enables men to utter the basic confession, "Jesus is Lord" (I Cor. 12:3). Further, Paul appeals to the reality of the church as evidence of his apostleship, which only has meaning because he was indeed a witness to the resurrected Lord (I Cor. 9:1-2).

8. What is the work or mission of Jesus Christ in coming to man? His work may best be characterized as obedience to the will of God unto death (Phil. 2:8); and to draw forth from man radical obedience to Himself as Lord, thereby enabling those who so respond to be saved from this world's existence and death just as he himself was raised from the dead by a merciful and loving Father (Rom. 10:9). He is "the beginning, the first-born from the dead" (Col. 1:18), "and through him to reconcile to himself all things whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:20); through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about

³⁷ Cf. E. L. Allen, "The Lost Kerygma", New Testament Studies, III, 4 (July 1957), 349ff., who holds that the tradition is authentic but that a serious breach of continuity occurred in the process of transmission so that it never reached the men who wrote the Gospels.

obedience to the faith for the sake of his name among all the Gentiles, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:6).

In his obedience unto death Jesus Christ makes an accounting to God for all former sins of his followers and God in his righteousness redeems all who are in Christ, i.e., who confess from faith that "Jesus is Lord". The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the ground for faith in him as Lord; hence the two-part act cannot really be separated, i.e. his death wherein redemption from man's prior sins is accomplished, and the resurrection wherein man can come to know and understand himself as subject in radical obedience to the reigning Lord, Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:22-25, 4:24, 10:9). And it is this relationship to Jesus Christ which makes possible redemption from sins, and salvation from death for the individual believer.

The contrast with the Palestinian kerygma is striking though subtle for there we found the resurrection to signify the faithfulness of Yahweh to his promises made to the Fathers of Israel, that Israel has been redeemed, the salvation of the chosen people was assured, a new age was near; but here in the Hellenistic kerygma the resurrection is the means whereby individuals might come to know redemption from sin and salvation, from this world's existence and death.

In the Palestinian version, Jesus is truly God's apostle, commissioned to bring the glorious news of God's will and plan for his people, and to be his exalted agent in the coming Kingdom. In the Hellenistic version, Jesus works on behalf of his people, earning for them God's forgiveness by his obedience unto death, and as their Lord who is at the right hand of God interceding for them (Rom. 8:34).

9. What is the desired or expected response from the Kerygma? That "every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:11). Clearly this is the response intended from the communication of the kerygma we find in these sources. That this confession is really what is essential and crucial is confirmed by the words in Rom. 10:9, "...because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

As opposed to the speeches in Acts, baptism is not mentioned at all either here or in any of our sources. This may serve to explain Paul's reluctance to be concerned about water baptism when he says, "For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power" (I Cor. 1:17). The certainty that an affirmation to

the lordship of Jesus is dependent upon the action of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:3) indicates that baptism into Christ Jesus has already occurred. Thus it is that Paul can interpret baptism to mean being baptized into his death and rising again with him to newness of life (Rom. 6:3-4) for it is faith in the dying and rising Lord which is attested to in the confession. Flemington refers to Paul's understanding of baptism as the kerygma in action, for the rite gathers up into a significant deed the central fact of the apostolic message, i.e., "behind every baptism was the death and resurrection of Jesus, that Act of God which opened the way into the New Age".³⁸

The radical difference in this understanding of baptism as compared to the Jewish Christian baptism of repentance can be seen in the story of Apollos, the Alexandrian Christian Jew, who had only been baptized into the baptism of repentance. That he is a Jewish Christian is obvious, for "he had been instructed in the way of the Lord" (Acts 18:25) and "he powerfully confuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Christ was Jesus". Here then are the basic characteristics of the Palestinian kerygma; namely, that Jesus was the promised

³⁸ W. F. Flemington, The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism, (London: S.P.C.K., 1957), p. 73.

Messiah and baptism meant the sign of man's repentance.

Though Apollos is mysteriously left in Corinth, a tie-in to the next story is made through the common reference to John's baptism, for Paul discovered a group of disciples (believers in Jesus Christ) in Ephesus, who though baptized in the Jewish fashion had never heard of the Holy Spirit. And so Paul corrects this situation by baptizing them into the name of the Lord Jesus, and with the laying on of his hands, "the Holy Spirit came on them" (Acts 19:5-6).

Conclusion

In this chapter we have sought to locate, describe and understand the kerygma in its original Palestinian setting and birthplace, and to discover what had happened to it when carried into the Hellenistic setting of the Gentile church. In both situations we found that the good news was a "fitting" message being couched in thought-forms and language which could be heard, understood, and accepted for they spoke directly to the real needs of the people to whom it was proclaimed.

The apostles, to whom the message was entrusted and to whom authority was granted by the living Lord, constituted the firm foundation for the new religion and for the organized institution, the Church, which was to be the

bearer of the saving message to the entire world as this temporal time unfolded into history at God's good pleasure.

CHAPTER III

THE KERYGMA AND THE SACRED

The understanding of the development of the offices of bishop, presbyter, and deacon in primitive Christianity remains open for scholarly research and speculation, despite the dogmatic justifications for the traditional forms of church government made by representatives of the papal, episcopal, presbyterian and congregational structures, all presumably firmly based on New Testament authority.

It is important that we deal with this problem, for the development of an ordained, clerical group in the Christian Church was intimately related to the development of the traditions which carried forward the essential message of the Christian faith, the kerygma.

The interrelations of man and message are complex, and each affected the other as the "hardening" process was affected. In eras of gradual change, the society or rather the people assimilate change with ease, as if they were unaware of the changes taking place. An example of this would be the evolving process which creates a language. To trace each subtle movement or shift in sound, spelling, content and usage is a monumental task,

whereas a comparison of structures widely separated on the developmental scale reveals change in an amplified fashion.

So here in this study, we will move from the time of the primitive kerygma to the second and third centuries seeking insight to the changes made during the crucial formative years of the Christian religion as seen from the perspective of the organized church of that time. Dix defines this latter period as the period of "the historic threefold ministry" of bishop, presbyters, and deacons¹ which existed from A.D. 160 to A.D. 314.

We shall first turn to the work of Hippolytus, distinguished presbyter and theologian of the Roman church who was involved in a local schism, claiming to be the lawful bishop of Rome. His "Apostolic Tradition" (A.D. 215-220) is most helpful in understanding the practice of the Roman church at the turn of the century. Dix believes the Rome's policy could have been acceptable everywhere,² for this work circulated widely throughout the East.

The Office of Bishop

By this time, the three major orders of clergy,

¹
Dom Gregory Dix, "The Ministry in the Early Church", The Apostolic Ministry (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1946), p. 190.

²
Ibid., p. 193.

bishop, presbyter, and deacon had been established; and ordination, understood as a sacramental laying on of hands, was a requirement for clerical office. This practice was taken over from Judaism, and was required for the performance of a special work (λειτουργία) or function in a divinely organized worship. Thus Dix says, "holy order" (κλήρος) at A.D. 200 is concerned not so much with 'office' in the Christian society as such, as with what we still call 'liturgical' worship, and especially with the Eucharist".³

If we examine the account in Hippolytus of the ordination or consecration ceremony for the office of bishop, we should gain insight into the church's understanding of his duties and authority.

- (1) He was nominated. Then he was approved and accepted by all the people, i.e., the laity and presbyters as well as those bishops in attendance, all of whom were gathered together on the Lord's day. (Ap. Trad., II. 1,2)
- (2) The ceremony was accomplished by the laying on of hands of the attending bishops, while the presbyters remained silent; and through the prayer of ordination spoken by the presiding bishop. (Ap. Trad., II. 2)
- (3) In the ordination prayer, the Holy Spirit is asked to empower the new bishop, whom God has chosen, to do his work. This work in the word of the prayer is as follows:

³
Ibid., p. 194.

- (a) "to shepherd Thy holy flock,
- (b) to serve as Thine high priest,
- (c) that he may minister blamelessly by night and day,
- (d) that he may unceasingly behold and propitiate Thy countenance.
- (e) and offer to Thee the Gifts of Thy Holy Church."⁴

(4) Further, the invoking of the Spirit grants the new bishop authority to act as a priest or the representative of God in three basic functions:

- (a) "to forgive sins", i.e., to celebrate the Eucharist and to baptize and to impose conditions for the return of apostates to the Church.
- (b) "to assign lots," i.e., to ordain the clergy and presumably to confirm the laity.
- (c) to "loose every bond", i.e., to exorcise, heal and minister to the needs of the people.

Thus, it is clear that the bishop is, first and foremost a priest, a man exercising the special vocation of mediator between God and the people. He fulfills this role particularly in the administration of the sacraments, and eminently in the celebration of the Eucharist. He is the link between God's countenance and the people. In this essential role then as priest, the bishop gives substance to the concept of the church, so that Cyprian could say, "These form a Church, the people united to their high-priest and the flock following its shepherd.

⁴ Quoted by Ibid., p. 196.

Wherefore you must know that a bishop is constituted by his Church and a Church by its bishop."⁵

Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch at the turn of the first century, is a key figure in our attempt to grasp the significance of the office of bishop, for we can recognize in his writings the beginnings of the thought expressed by Cyprian, Hippolytus and others of the later time. Luke says:

Ignatius is exceedingly anxious in each community to strengthen respect for the bishop and presbyters. He ascribes the fullest kind of divine authority to their organization, and recognizes no church, institution, or worship without their sanction.⁶

In his own words, Ignatius emphasizes the radical obedience which is to be characteristic of a Christian's relationship to his bishop and presbyter. He says, "see that you all follow the bishop, as Jesus Christ follows the Father, and the presbytery as if it were the Apostles".⁷

Likewise we find in Hippolytus's ordination prayer a picture of the bishop as one who stands before the people in the place of God. And Ignatius also affirms that for the church to be the church, the bishop must

⁵ Quoted by Ibid., p. 199-200.

⁶ The Apostolic Fathers (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1912), 167

⁷ Ign. Smyrnaens, viii. 1. in Ibid.

preside, either in his own person or through his appointed delegate.

"Let no one do any of the things appertaining to the Church without the bishop. Let that be considered a valid Eucharist which is celebrated by the bishop, or by one whom he appoints. Wherever the bishop appears let the congregation be present; just as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not lawful either to baptize or to hold an "agape" without the bishop; but whatever he approve, this is also pleasing to God, that everything which you do may be secure and valid."⁸

Ignatius may well represent a water-shed in the history of the Christian religion, for he retains evidence of the past era while affirming the new practice of the coming age of the Church. We see this in terms of the establishment of a new church order headed by the office of the bishop, and in what appears to be a shift in the cultic practice from "agape" or love feast to the formal sacrament of the Eucharist. Of signal importance, however, in this development, of which Ignatius is a key figure, is that the identity of bishop and church provides a structure which will assure the continuity and growth of the new religion. For the bishop is soon charged with the responsibility of defending the new faith against the forces of state, heresy and the competing religions of the day. So it was that when the need arose to establish the truth and authority of the doctrine which was being

8

Ign. Smyrnaens, viii. 1-2. in Ibid.

developed and proclaimed, it was the bishop who could properly guarantee its authenticity.

Ehrhardt explains that the doctrine of apostolic succession was created to meet the real threat from the gnostic heretics, and that this doctrine per se originated⁹ in the second century. But of even more basic significance, according to Ehrhardt, is the fact that this doctrine is made up of two elements, "one being the idea of succession to the ancient priesthood of Israel, the other the idea of succession to the traditions of the Apostolic teaching".¹⁰ Thus, apostolic tradition was joined to the concept of priestly succession, and we may recognize from the gospel forms themselves, which are basically expanded passion stories, and thereby a translation of a cultic event into an historical event; an interdependence of tradition and cult. "This combination appeared in the double duties of the bishop, who as priest and as successor to the High Priests of Israel offered the divine sacrifice, and preached the Gospel according to the traditions of the Apostles."¹¹

⁹ Arnold Ehrhardt, The Apostolic Succession (London: Lutterworth Press, 1953), p. 6.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

The Eucharist

The key to the shift in emphasis of the kerygma from the primitive church to the established Catholic Church of the second century lies in the term "sacrifice". Dix tells us that by the time of Hippolytus, the order of the Church was so organized that each group, clergy and laity, "had its own leitourgia, i.e., its own special function in the corporate life and action of the Christian 'body', in which it is irreplaceable; and this finds its supreme expression in the corporate performance of the eucharistic action, the vital act of the Body of Christ".¹²

Thus, the kerygma, the central saving proclamation of the Christian faith, had to find expression in terms of this vital cultic act, the Eucharist, if it was to be carried forward into the new time without loss. That this is exactly what happened will be the burden of this chapter to explain.

Rudolf Bultmann believes Mark's creation of the gospel-form to be a product of the Hellenistic Church, and he attributes its origin to two factors: the taking over of the Palestinian tradition, and the need to reveal to the

¹²

Dix, op. cit., p. 196.

Gentile Christians, Jesus as a historic person as well as a cultic diety. He says: "Jesus would have to be made obviously a didaskalos to Gentile Christians, in spite of his primary cultic significance";¹³ and that "in order to retain the peculiar character of Christian faith - the union of the cultic diety with the historic person of Jesus - a tradition about the story of Jesus was necessary."¹⁴ Further, he explains that the Christ of the faith and the cult, and therefore the kerygma of Christ is cultic legend¹⁵ and the gospels are expanded cultic legends.

If he is right, and the establishment of cult and ritual before speculation and doctrine by the history of religions school is strong support for his stand, then we must seek to discover the cultic practices which shaped and informed the tradition. As the ritual develops, refines and hardens into a formal structure, so do the attendant activities of office and doctrine develop and establish their supporting structures and forms.

¹³ Rudolf Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 369.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 371.

The Christian Passover

We have already noted the concept of the unity of bishop and church, and the primary self-understanding of the Church in its service to God as participating in the sacramental Eucharist with its basic theme of sacrifice. It is the thesis of this paper that the roots of this church order lay in the priestly, sacrificial, sacramental orders of Judaism and the translation of their most important festival, Passover, into the Christian religion as its primary cultic act.

G. D. Kilpatrick says:

It is a fair conclusion that, if an institution existed in Judaism before A.D. 70 and is found in later Christianity, i.e., in the Didache, Hippolytus' Apostolic Tradition or in the Church's constitutional literature, it has been derived from Judaism at an early date unless some other source is clearly indicated.

Since between A.D. 70 and 135, Christianity rapidly developed from a Jewish sect into a religion independent of and often hostile to Judaism, we may put most of the Church's debt to Judaism before A.D. 100.¹⁶

Thus, we turn to the Christian Passover, which according to Schaff was "the oldest and most important annual festival of the church, and can be traced back to

16

G. D. Kilpatrick, The Origins of the Gospel According to St. Matthew (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), p. 1.

the first century, or at all events to the middle of the second, when it was universally observed".¹⁷ Using Kilpatrick's insight, and being aware of the fact that the Jewish sacrificial and priestly elements of worship ended with the fall of the temple in A.D. 70, we can be reasonably certain that the Passover celebration was taken over by the Christian sect prior to A.D. 70.

Further, Schaff says that, "It is based on the view that Christ crucified and risen is the centre of faith",¹⁸ and this statement clearly identifies the Christian Passover with the primitive kerygma, and further confirms Bultmann's statement that the kerygma is cult legend. Certainly, this important cultic festival must have had a major impact upon the developing Christian religion.

We had discovered in the first chapter of this paper that the primitive Palestinian kerygma proclaimed the resurrected Jesus the Messiah by virtue of his being raised from the dead by Almighty God. However, a major obstacle to the acceptance of this message was the fact that Jesus had been killed by crucifixion. Pierson Parker describes death by crucifixion as follows:

¹⁷ Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1952), II, 207.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Partly as a warning to other potential offenders, the condemned man was made to carry his cross, or the transverse part, along the public roads and to the execution ground, which itself was nearly always in a public place. There he was stripped of all his clothing. Affixed to the cross, he could not care for his bodily needs, and was the object of taunts and indignities from passers-by...

Death by crucifixion brought Jesus into public disrepute. It placed him under an ancient curse, "for it is written, 'cursed be every one who hangs on a tree' (Gal. 3:13; cf. Deut. 21:23). This provided the greatest obstacle in the subsequent effort to convert Jews to the new faith. Nothing in the Old Testament or in Jewish lore had prepared them for the thought that the Messiah should be thus handled. To many Jews, the Christian claim was a shocking blasphemy.¹⁹

But the fact remains that the first Christians were indeed Jews, and we can hardly assume that they were not religiously sensitive people. Therefore, it seems elementary to assume that this unspeakable death had to be interpreted in such a way that even the most devout Jew could at least have a possibility of hearing the saving word. And such an interpretation was the identification of Jesus as the Christian paschal lamb. Thus, his death on the cross could be understood as the sacrifice of the Lamb of God on the altar in order that the faithful might be delivered from the bondage of sin as the Hebrews of old were delivered from their bondage in Egypt.

19

Pierson Parker, "Crucifixion", The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), I. 747.

We find in the Gospel according to John a tradition which directly relates the crucifixion of Jesus to the sacrificial offering of the paschal lamb when he includes in his account an authentic story describing the breaking of the criminals' legs. The soldiers passed by Jesus because they saw he was already dead (John 19:33), and instead of breaking his legs they pierced his side. John accounts for this with these words: "For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'Not a bone of him shall be broken'. And again another scripture says, 'They shall look on him whom they have pierced'" (John 19:36-37). In this story then the tradition relates to Jesus' crucifixion the divine instructions given to Moses and Aaron regarding the passover lamb, "and you shall not break a bone of it" (Exod. 12:46); and in Zechariah's report of the coming great day of the Lord (14:1), Yahweh says:

"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of compassion and supplication, so that when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a first-born" (Zech. 12:10).

The message conveyed by means of this dual reference to Old Testament authority is overwhelming in its directness and simplicity in explaining or interpreting the horrible death by crucifixion suffered by the Lord. The first reference identifies him as the passover lamb; the

second, cites the results, the release or cleansing from sin, "On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1).

Thus, for John, the kerygma finds expression in the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus in both cultic and messianic terms.

Paul makes but a few sacrificial allusions in his writings,²⁰ so that the directness of his statement in I Cor. 5:7, "For Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed", leaves us astounded. He continues by asking the people to celebrate the festival with a new spirit of sincerity and truth (5:8). Craig is puzzled by Paul's use of the Passover festival as a vehicle for scoring his point, as he says:

We should remember, however, that the Passover sacrifice had no connection with the forgiveness of sin. Paul assumes that his Gentile readers will be familiar with the Passover customs. We wish that we knew if the Jewish festivals were continued at this time in Paul's churches. At least the Paul of the Acts of the Apostles was a man who was not indifferent to their celebration (Acts 20:16).²¹

20

Clarence Tucker Craig, "Exegesis - I Cor., "The Interpreter's Bible, X, 65.

21

Ibid.

Here we find Craig assuming that Paul is speaking about or perhaps participating in the Jewish festival of the Passover, rather than its Christian counterpart wherein the deliverance from sin is a fundamental element in the ritual.

Further, the words of institution which Paul says he received from the Lord (I Cor. 11:23-26), have a relationship to Jewish Passover tradition. Abbott quotes the Jerusalem Gemara which says, "It is taught: Outside Palestine there were to be two kinds of cooked food on the first evening of the Paschal Feast, one as a remembrance²² of the Paschal Lamb, the other the offering of the Feast". He then comments on this as follows:

This indicates, if it does not demonstrate, that it was a common practice for Jews at a distance from Jerusalem - before, as well as after the destruction of the Temple - to commemorate the Passover by a feast "in remembrance of it". And, if that was so, the phrase "in remembrance" would naturally be in the mind of all the Jews of the Dispersion, on the Paschal night, long before Christ died. Afterwards, when Jews had learned, with Paul, to say "Christ our Passover", they would be prepared to accept the phrase "in remembrance of Christ" or (as having been actually uttered by Him), "in remembrance of me".²³

J. S. Clemens adds the following for our consideration:

²²

Edwin A. Abbott, Paradosis (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1904), p. 182.

²³

Ibid.

But St. Paul's mention of the 'cup of blessing' (I Cor. 10:16), coupled with the fact that he had already seen in the Paschal Lamb an illustration of Christ, makes it clear that he at any rate viewed this ordinance as the Christian counterpart of the Jewish Passover.²⁴

The "Passover" Kerygma

Consequently, if we understand the Christian kerygma in terms of cult and ritual, Paul preserves for us good evidence for the translating of the Jewish Passover with its sacrificial motif into a Christian ritual fully dependent upon suffering and sacrifice for its convicting power. This annual festival would of course be the high point of the Christian year, and as such would find an eminent place in the gospel tradition. It is there in the broad context of the Passion narrative, and more specifically in terms of the story of the "upper room".

By considering the accounts of the "last supper" as a description of the Christian Passover, one can readily explain the absence of the meat of the lamb, for in the historicizing of the ritual in terms of this last meeting of Jesus with His disciples, it is obvious that the Paschal Lamb is present at the feast - the person of Jesus. New

²⁴

J. S. Clemens, "Passover", Dictionary of the Apostolic Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), II, 134.

symbols of sacrifice were found in the familiar and common items of bread and wine, or indeed fish and water, but the essential meaning of the festival was the identification of Jesus of Nazareth as the true Paschal Lamb who is present. We are unable to develop and establish the thesis that the focus of the Christian Lord's Day worship, the Eucharist, actually stemmed from the annual Passover festival, for it is beyond the scope of this paper, but we intend to show the real impact this festival made upon both the order and the doctrine of the Christian religion. And that this theme of sacrifice and suffering provides a unifying structure of thought which serves to relate the Jewishness of primitive Christianity with the Hellenism of Catholic Christianity.

It is easy to speculate from this point on how the theme of the Paschal Lamb could have informed the weekly worship practice of the Christian community, for the table fellowship or the "agape" provides the natural setting for experiencing the high moment offered by the Christian Passover, "the presence of the Lord".

It is not by chance that the tradition retains those "appearance" stories concerning the resurrected Lord which are associated with the table, i.e., "When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they

recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight" (Luke 24:30-31); "And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered he said to the, 'Have you anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them" (Luke 24:41-43) And it is not strange, therefore, to find Luke relating the kerygma as a part of this same story, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name..." (24:45-47). Here we again find the two basic elements of the "passover" kerygma, namely, suffer-sacrifice and forgiveness of sins.

Further, we must come to understand these two elements in a direct relationship to the two elements contained in the kerygma, death and resurrection, which is to say simply that a shift has occurred so that death and resurrection come to mean "suffer/sacrifice" and "forgiveness of sins". The first relationship is obvious; the impossible death of the Messiah is interpreted in terms of sacrifice and suffering, but the second is not so easy. John provides us with a key, when he places on the lips of Jesus as he addresses his disciples on the first Easter day, these words, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained". (John 20:22b-23)

Here we have directly related to the presence of the resurrected Lord, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of sins. For it is the knowledge or awareness of forgiveness which is identical to receiving the gift of the Spirit, and in this existential situation the presence of the living Lord is experienced. Or, one knows he has been forgiven as he experiences the presence of the resurrected and heavenly Lord.

And so in the ritual of the Christian Passover, the Lord as the Paschal Lamb is present in his death and in his resurrection, as sacrifice and as forgiveness of sins. And the need to participate again and again in the refreshing experience of the Lord's presence need not be explained, but it could point to the explanation as to how this annual festival of Passover could become the source for structuring the weekly worship service.

We shall now turn to sources acknowledged to be of a liturgical nature to see if and how the kerygma was incorporated into the faith and practice of the young church.

CHAPTER IV

THE KERYGMA IN ACTION IN THE SECOND CENTURY CHURCH

Justin Martyr

We find that by the time of Justin (110 - 165 A.D.), an ordered service of worship had evolved, composed of three basic elements; the synaxis including a reading of scripture and an exposition of it by the bishop, the Eucharist, and the collection of offerings to care for the needy. Justin's order is as follows:

A. Synaxis

1. The memoirs of the apostles, or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits.
2. When the reader has ceased the president (bishop) verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things.
3. Then the congregation stands and prays.

B. Eucharist

1. The elements of bread and wine are brought forward.
2. The president offers prayers and thanksgivings according to his power or ability.
3. The people assent, saying "Amen" - (so be it).
4. The eucharistic elements are distributed. To those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons.

C. Collection

1. A collection is taken to care for orphans, widows, sick, or for any others who were in want, and

those who were in bondage, and strangers, "and in a word takes care of all who are in need,,, and they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit".¹

Now, according to Dom Gregory Dix, the synaxis was a separate rite quite distinct from the Eucharist, although usually held immediately before it. He says, "it thus involved no sacramental ministry and therefore no ordination".² However, by this time the identification of the bishop with the church had been accomplished and the people expected and demanded that the bishop deliver the sermon for he was "the church's mouthpiece, as it were, towards men as well as towards God".³ But it was the sacramental ministry derived from a sacrificial concept of ritual which demanded the special honors and power invoked by ordination which we have already noted derives from the ancient priesthood of Israel.⁴

I Peter

F. L. Cross believes that he can best understand and interpret the First Epistle of Peter in terms of reading it as a Paschal liturgy. He makes two points quickly, first

¹ Justin, I Apol., lxxvii. in The Ante-Nicene Fathers.

² Dom Gregory Dix, "The Ministry in the Early Church" The Apostolic Ministry (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1946), footnote 2, p. 196.

³ Dom Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy (Westminster, Md.: Dacre Press, 1945), p. 40.

that "For the primitive Christian communities acceptance of Jesus as Messiah no more required the abandonment of the Passover than of the Old Testament itself".⁵ We have taken a step beyond this, in holding that it is precisely the acceptance of the Passover in new terms which enables the acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah. Secondly, he most insightfully discovered that the centrality of the "suffering" theme running through I Peter is due to the Pasch and not to persecution as is commonly held by many scholars.⁶⁷

Cross, in explaining I Peter 4:1, says:

...the word 'suffering' is charged with all the deep religious associations of the Pasch, that 'to have suffered in the flesh' means to have put on the Paschal Christ and thereby to have been released from the power of sin.⁸

Thus, we have both of the elements of the "passover" kerygma present clearly and simply; suffering and deliverance from sin. And Cross interprets 2:20-24 as "the

⁵ F. L. Cross, I Peter - A Paschal Liturgy (London: Mowbray, 1954), p. 8.

⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

⁷ Archibald M. Hunter, "I Peter: Introduction" The Interpreter's Bible, (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1953), XII, 78-79.

⁸ Cross, op. cit., p. 20.

religious basis of all suffering by the Christian, its direct relation to Christ as the archetypal Sufferer, the true Pasch".⁹

Reicke agrees with Cross to the extent that he believes that I Peter, though in the form of an epistle, really contains or is a baptismal sermon, or possibly a confirmation sermon.¹⁰ Since for adults confirmation usually followed immediately after the baptism ceremony, it may well be both. If this is the case, and the evidence presented by both men is convincing, then we would expect this sermon to present the Christian message in depth, fullness and power, and this it does.

We find the kerygma in its basic form proclaiming the death and resurrection of Jesus four times in I Peter as follows:

1:3 ...we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

1:21 Through him you have confidence in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

3:18 ...being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.

9

Ibid., p. 21.

10

Bo Reicke, The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude (Garden City, Doubleday, 1964), p. 74.

3:21 Baptism, which corresponds to this now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And in this latter reference we find the direct relationship between forgiveness of sin, i.e., clear conscience and the resurrection of Christ. Further, the identification of Jesus with the Paschal Lamb occurs in the following passages:

1:2 ...chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood.

1:19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

2:24b By his wounds you have been healed. (Reference to Isa. 53:5-12 which includes the phrase "like a lamb that is led to the slaughter".)

The theme of suffering and sacrifice runs throughout the epistle; first in terms of Christ as the archetypal Sufferer, the perfect sacrifice, and secondly, the Christian in following his vocation participates in the suffering of Christ. In addition to the above we cite nine more passages which deal specifically with this theme.

They are:

1:11 ...they inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory.

2:21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

2:23b ...when he suffered, he did not threaten.

2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

3:18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.

4:1-2 Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same thought, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of time in the flesh no longer by human passions but by the will of God.

4:13 But rejoice in so far as you share Christ's sufferings.

5:1 ...and a witness of the sufferings of Christ as well as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed.

5:9 Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experience of suffering is required of your brotherhood throughout the world.

Once we understand this emphasis on suffering in I Peter to be an exposition of the sacrifice of Jesus as the Paschal Lamb, the need to date this work during periods of persecution becomes less urgent, and its date of composition, as preferred by many scholars, before the death of Peter may be well founded,¹¹ though obviously many other factors are involved in dating this document. But if Cross is right, I Peter would witness to the early development of

¹¹

So hold Reicke, op. cit., p. 71, Cross, op. cit., p. 43, 44, and Hunter, "I Peter: Introduction", XII, 80.

a liturgy (60-70 B.C.), wherein the theme of sacrifice and suffering is central, thereby indicating the forces at work which would influence the understanding of the function of congregational leaders as being a sacramental one.

I Peter, therefore, qualifies as a connecting link between Paul and Ignatius. Looking back to Paul in terms of identifying Jesus as the Paschal Lamb plus carrying forward to Ignatius a real sense of the "already" but¹² "not yet" which is so important to Paul's theology. It looks ahead to Ignatius in its emphasis on the suffering or passion of Jesus Christ as the means of salvation, and the call to Christians to participate in suffering as a natural element in their vocation.

We have already noted the concern of Ignatius to¹³ establish the monarchical bishopric, and we now turn to his writings for insight to his understanding of the kerygma.

¹²

Cross, op. cit., p. 43.

¹³

Cf. Supra, p. 43.

Ignatius

There can be little doubt as to the centrality and importance of *θάνατος* (death) in the theology of Ignatius. For Ignatius, it is the heart and soul of the Christian gospel, i.e. eternal death for natural man has been overcome and in place of the pseudo-life known to man as he finds himself in this world, a true life is offered to him in and through faith in Christ Jesus. Since eternal death is what must be overcome, it is for Ignatius an essential part of the mystery that victory comes only in and through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, which results in true life for himself and mysteriously for those who believe in him.

Ignatius helps us understand his ultimate concern regarding death in the following statements:

...for God was manifest as man for the "newness" of eternal life, and that which had been prepared by God received its beginning. Hence all things were disturbed, because the abolition of death was being planned (Eph. 19:3)

There is one Physician who is both flesh and spirit,... true life in death. (Eph. 7:2)

And they immediately touched him and believed, being mingled both with his flesh and spirit. Therefore they despised even death, and were proved to be above death. (Smyr. 3:2)

For when you are in subjection to the bishop as to Jesus Christ it is clear to me that you are living not after men, but after Jesus Christ, who died for our sake, that

by believing on his death you may escape death. (Tral. 2:1)

Seeing then that there is an end to all, that the choice is between two things, death and life, and that each is to go to his own place.....and unless we willingly choose to die through him in his passion, his life is not in us. (Mag. 5:1)

Thus, we find that for Ignatius the death of Christ is essential to the salvation man will find in and through faith, i.e. saved man too will escape eternal death, for he will find the true life of Jesus Christ in his death.

For Ignatius, the term "flesh", represents all which this world "is", whereas "spirit" represents all that which is divine - true life, impassibility, love, freedom from the powers of this world, and the like. And the work of the Savior is somehow to capture the essence of "flesh" redeeming it through its incorporation into the essence which is "spirit".

And this is exactly what Jesus Christ has already accomplished through his death on the cross. He is "both flesh and spirit..., true life in death" (Eph. 7:2), and "that in them there may be a union of the flesh and spirit of Jesus Christ, who is our everlasting life, a union of faith and love, to which is nothing preferable, and (what is more than all) a union of Jesus and the Father". (Mag. 1:2)

Torrance explains Ignatius's emphasis on this unity of flesh and spirit in this manner:

Appropriated by faith in the death of Christ and in the Eucharist, the principle of new life (the blood or life of the new and perfect Man) is regarded as the divine energy, the dynamic of faith, which perfects the union of flesh and spirit, the union of the believer with the crucified and risen Lord.¹⁴

Thus, Ignatius understands salvation to be the transformation of mortal man from a natural man under the dominion of the Prince of this world to man in union with God. All this is made possible because Jesus Christ unified flesh and Spirit in his person through his passion and resurrection: He shares his resurrection with those who have faith in him.

Ignatius calls the Eucharist, "the medicine of immortality, the antidote that we should not die, but live forever in Jesus Christ". (Eph. 20:2) Thus the sacramental nature of the Eucharist is clearly apparent in the thought of Ignatius as the death of Jesus Christ is reenacted, and in this sacred ritual the believer participates in the same union of flesh and Spirit which is the mark of Christ's victory and "the medicine of immortality".

¹⁴

Thomas F. Torrance, The Doctrine of Grace in the Apostolic Fathers (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1948), p. 66.

II Clement

This work attributed to Clement of Rome by antiquity is presently recognized as originating in a later period, possibly the middle of the second century. According to Harnack and Lightfoot, it received its identification through its association with the authentic Clementine writing in the archives of the Corinthian church.¹⁵ That it is a sermon or homily is generally accepted, "for the writer distinctly states (cf. Cap. xix) that he is reading aloud, and implies that he is doing so in a meeting for religious worship".¹⁶ Lake adds that "The main object of the writer is to inculcate a high Christology, a pure life, and a belief in the resurrection of the flesh".¹⁷

It is not easy to discover or isolate the kerygma in this work, for its primary thrust is aimed at the work and responsibility of man, rather than to the work of God or Christ, in the achievement of salvation. The author makes only one direct reference to the suffering of Jesus Christ, and none concerning his resurrection. The reference to Christ's suffering is as follows:

¹⁵ Apostolic Fathers, I, 126-127.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 125.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 126.

1:2b And those who listen as though it were a little matter are sinning, and we also are sinning, if we do not know whence and by whom, and to what place we were called, and how great sufferings Jesus Christ endured for our sake.

In this opening chapter, the preacher has identified Jesus Christ with God and specifically with the divine office of Judge. He has acknowledged the suffering of Jesus, and then explains his saving work in the imagery of creation. Salvation, according to the preacher, is only possible through Jesus Christ, "For he had pity on us, and saved us in his mercy, and regarded the great error and destruction which was in us, and our hopelessness of salvation save from him; for he called us when we were not, and it was his will that out of nothing we should come to being" (1:7-8).

This language of creation is appropriate to the experience of baptism which involves the rising from the water of a new creation or a new being, raised to life through the saving work of the Lord. But quickly he sets the stage for his main theme, the response of the new born, newly created Christian to the world and to life. Jesus is now "the Judge of the living and the dead", and Christians owe a great debt of holiness to him which imposes a duty and obligation upon them (1:1 and 1:3). This duty to Christ means to confess him by doing what he says, i.e., obeying his commandments and in return he will intercede

for the believer with God, the Father (3:2-4).

The point of it all is that sin is a real threat continually, and temptation must be earnestly fought off through the process of repentance and good works in order that the final goal, eternal life, may be obtained. "So then, brethren, if we do the will of the Father, if we keep the flesh pure, and if we observe the commandments of the Lord, we shall obtain eternal life" (8:4). In all candor, he confesses his own sinfulness, and the power of the devil in his life, but that he is striving to follow after righteousness (18:2).

It is his understanding of flesh and spirit, and the resurrection of the flesh which relates his thought to that of Ignatius and which reveals to us his understanding of the kerygma he is proclaiming. He says:

9:2 Understand: in what state did you receive salvation, in what state did you receive your sight, except in this flesh?

9:5 if Christ, the Lord who saved us, though he was originally spirit, became flesh and so called us, so also we shall receive our reward in this flesh.

Our preacher is affirming his understanding that the salvation process takes place while man is in the flesh, living in the world where the "Devil" is still active, and this is obvious when one understands that Christ, who was originally spirit became flesh in order to save man. Now,

the reward of which he speaks is the resurrection of the flesh, "And let none of you say that this flesh is not judged and does not rise again" (9:1); with this statement he sounds like Ignatius. Thus it is that II Clement affirms the "already" of salvation as being a process involved "in the flesh" yet looking ahead to the "not yet" of resurrection.

The importance of this-world in the salvational scheme is revealed again in the following:

8:3 For after we have departed from this world, we can no longer make confession, or repent any more in that place.

Therefore II Clement exhorts his hearers to make the valiant effort toward purity in order to protect the flesh from corruption since it is the host for the Spirit. Again he can say:

14:2b ...the Church belongs not to the present, but has existed from the beginning; for she was spiritual, as was also our Jesus, but he was made manifest in the last days that he might save us.

The latter part of this verse sounds very much like I Peter 1:20, "He was destined before the foundation of the world but was made manifest at the end of time for your sake", and it seems to indicate, like Ignatius, that the essential work of Jesus in becoming man, i.e., taking on flesh, was to suffer and die in order that He as Spirit could purify and redeem man who is flesh. Thus, the

kerygma here proclaims that in the act of taking on flesh, including the death which is proper to being in the flesh, Christ imparts something of His own divine nature to those who belong to Him, namely, eternal life.

II Clement continues with his exposition of the relationship between "flesh" and Spirit" with these words:

For this flesh is an anti-type of the Spirit; no one therefore, who has corrupted the anti-type shall receive the reality. So then, he means this brethren: Guard the flesh, that you may receive the Spirit. (14:3b)

And so the real thrust of his sermon is to exhort the people to fight the battle against corruption with all their strength, and to repent of their failures and sins. Although the term "suffering" is not used frequently, the sermon itself is evidence of the suffering the Christian must endure in his battle with the temptations of the world. Time and time again he appeals for repentance (8:1, 2, 3; 9:8; 13:1; 16:1; 17:1; 19:1) so that when he says, "we are contending in the contest of the living God, and we are being trained by the life which now is, that we may gain the crown in that which is to come", (20:2), it is clear that suffering is essential to participating in the salvation effected by Jesus Christ.

And in his conclusion, the preacher borrows again from I Peter (5:10) when he says:

Let us then do righteousness, that we may be saved at the end. Blessed are they who obey these instructions: though they suffer for a short time in this world, they shall gather the immortal fruit of resurrection. Let not, then the pious grieve if he endure sorrow at this present time; a time of blessedness awaits him; he shall live again with the fathers above, and rejoice to an eternity wherein is no sorrow (19:3-4).

Conclusion

We have seen a thread of continuity running through I Peter, Ignatius, and II Clement which recognizes the need for the Christian to suffer if he is to participate in the salvation offered to him by the kerygma which proclaims the victory of Jesus Christ over the forces of sin and death. II Clement places the burden of valiant effort against corruption of the flesh, and the need for repentance upon the individual man in his sharing of Christ's work of suffering and battling the power of sin and temptation. Obviously the experience of the early Church (second century) reflects the real problem of dealing with the "devil" and the "temptations of the world", and that baptism in itself did not free them from this battle or protect them from the assaults of temptation.

Specifically then, the kerygma, i.e., the "good news" from God to man, as we have found it in these sources, emphasizes and focuses upon the suffering and death of Jesus Christ as that event which saves faithful man. The Christian, following his Lord, accepts the vocation of

suffering as a necessary element in the redemptive process, understanding suffering as concomitant with the continuing battle against sin which lasts as long as man lives in the flesh, in this world.

The hope and victory and, therefore, the good news of the kerygma lies in the fact of faith that Christ, being Spirit, living with the Father eternally, in taking upon himself our mortal flesh, redeems or changes its essence in such a way that the flesh assumes or receives the spiritual quality of Christ's divine nature, and this means eternal life.

Accordingly, the Eucharist embodies the kerygma in its emphasis upon the sacrifice, suffering, and death of Jesus Christ, and signifies to the participant in the Sacrament that he shares in the same union of flesh and Spirit which is, according to Ignatius, "the medicine of immortality."

The new quality of life potentially available to man because of the death of Christ, somehow becomes a reality in and through the sacramental action, so that the "not yet" can be experienced as the "already". This is what we hear and understand our sources to be saying. Thus this Sacrament embodies in its action the whole meaning of the Christian faith. It was an acting out of the kerygmatic

event by the community of believers, containing in itself the sum and substance of the promise and its fulfillment.

CHAPTER V

THE KERYGMA IN THE PREACHING OF AMBROSE AND AUGUSTINE

I. AMBROSE

The fourth century A.D. saw the establishment of the faith of the Catholic Church with and through the Council of Nices in A.D. 325, and the birth of two staunch defenders of orthodoxy, St. Ambrose (b. 340-d. 397), Bishop of Milan and St. Augustine (b. 354-d 430), Bishop of Hippo. This was a century of struggle, of growth, of the rise and fall of heterodoxy, and of power struggles between Church and Emperor.

The Church was called to fight on three major fronts during this century - against heresy, heathenism, and the secular power of the Emperor. And Ambrose of Milan, one of the four greatest Latin Fathers, was a stalwart pillar of the Catholic Church during this time. Consequently, we shall turn first to his work for insight to the kerygma as it was proclaimed during this crucial time.

First, we know from the record that "He spent much time daily in study and devotion, besides the more public duties of his office. He preached every Sunday and at certain seasons daily. His labours in preparing catechumens for baptism were blessed with great success,

amongst those taught by him being St. Augustine".¹ Ambrose himself tells us that he daily renewed the Sacrifice for his people.²

The Kerygma Proclaimed

Upon the death of his brother, Satyrus, in October of 379, Ambrose preached two sermons, one at his funeral, and the second "On the Belief in the Resurrection", delivered a week later, and it is this one which we will first consider.

It is a masterful treatise on death and the Christian promise of resurrection, and much of its power undoubtedly stemmed from the deep grief Ambrose felt at the death of his beloved brother. The kerygma for Ambrose finds expression in these words:

By the death of One the world was redeemed. For Christ, had He willed, need not have died, but He neither thought that death should be shunned as though there were any cowardice in it, nor could He have saved us better than by dying. And so His death is the life of all.³

We find, interestingly enough, that though the thrust of this sermon is to establish the validity and trust-

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Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds. "St. Ambrose - Select Works and Letters", in The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of The Christian Church (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1955), X, xv, xvi.

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Ep XX:15, in Ibid., X, 424.

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"Book II On Belief in the Resurrection", par. 46, in Ibid., X, 180.

worthiness of the Christian "belief in the Resurrection", he does not emphasize resurrection of the Lord as crucial to the faith, but rather his death. And so he continues his sermon.

We show forth His death when we pray; when we offer the Sacrifice we declare His death for His death is victory,
His death is our mystery,
His death is the yearly recurring solemnity of the world.....
His death, since we prove by the Divine Example that death alone found immortality, and that death itself redeemed itself. Death, then, is not be mourned over, for it is the cause of salvation for all.⁴

Now this passage contains much insight into Ambroses' thought and faith, if we can but do it justice. First, we must see in it a pulling together of the kerygma, i.e., the crucifixion and the resurrection into the one concept or term, namely death, and in Jesus' death, therefore, is the sum and substance of the Christian message of salvation and hope of resurrection. Secondly, we find here in these few lines the centrality of the sacrament of Sacrifice, as he terms it here, to the salvation work of Jesus Christ. Further, we must come to understand that the victory Ambrose speaks about is the victory over sin and death which Jesus Christ secured for his followers in and through his death.

In a most direct fashion Ambrose refers to the yearly

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Ibid.

"redemption" of the world, which may well refer to the annual Christian Passover Festival.

We will keep these basic points in mind as we continue to explore his thought for insights to his understanding of the kerygma. Let us see further what he has to say about death and life, and man and reality for that matter.

The Kerygma and Reality

Ambrose reveals to us in this sermon a systematic understanding of reality in metaphysical terms. He speaks of reality in terms of the natural and the supernatural worlds: "this" life and "that" life, body and soul, nature and spirit, mortal and immortal, and he sees death like a barrier or a separation or a water shed, or maybe like a bridge, a link, a connector between his two worlds of reality, for that which separates also links in that it possesses frontiers common to the two areas. Thus in speaking about man as body and soul, he says:

If our flesh shrinks from prison, if it abhors everything which denies it the power from roaming about; when it seems, indeed, to be always going forth, with its little powers of hearing or seeing what is beyond itself, how much more does our soul desire to escape from that prison-house of the body, which, being free with movement like the air, goes whither we know not, and comes whence we know not.

We know, however, that it survives the body, and that being set free from the bars of the body, it sees with clear gaze those things which before, dwelling in

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the body, it could not see.

For since the whole course of our life consists in the union of body and soul.....⁶

But what is meditation on death but a kind of separation of body and soul, for death itself is defined as nothing else than the separation of body and soul.⁷

Now then for Ambrose, death in its natural sense is the departure, or shift, or translation of the person from this life in the flesh, in this world, joined to the body; in "this" life which is a life liable to sin to "that" life⁸ which is reserved for reward and for punishment, but which knows not sin. Thus, Ambrose affirms that death is really intimately associated with life, so that in death is life, which we know in faith because of the kerygma - the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is one grand saving event. And also that death as Christians know it really involves a freeing from a life liable to sin, albeit not from the fruits of that life in terms of punishment or reward.

And because during this life the body was involved equally with the soul, Ambrose scores the point that it must rise again in order to stand with the soul on the

⁵ II 20, 21, in Ibid., X, 177.

⁶ VI, 52, in Ibid., X, 181.

⁷ II, 35, in Ibid., X, 179.

⁸ II, 123, in Ibid., X, 195.

"day of Judgment"; "For how shall the soul be summoned to judgment without the body, when account has to be rendered of the companionship of itself and the body?"⁹ Ambrose affirms that since human existence, both spatially (world) and temporally (age), is evil, the kerygma proclaims a release from the bondage to both the world and the age.

He says:

And fitly is the resurrection of the dead at the consummation of the world, lest after the resurrection we should have to fall back into this evil age. For this cause Christ suffered that He might deliver us from this evil world; lest the temptations of this world should overthrow us again, and it should be an injury to us to come again to life, if we came to life again for sin.¹⁰

Here the kerygma assumes its classic form, the suffering of Christ delivers faithful man from a life wherein sin operates and tempts and controls. First, the soul is released at death from its bondage to the world, and finally at the end of the age, the body is resurrected and the new life begins in a new world free from sin. And implied in this kerygmatic statement for Ambrose is both the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, for it is in his resurrection to another life not of this world or of this life, which provides the substance for our hope. Thus, for Ambrose, the death or suffering of Jesus Christ

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II, 52, in Ibid., X, 182.

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II, 62, in Ibid., X, 184.

really includes both elements of the primitive kerygma i.e., Christ's death and resurrection, and the promise contained within the kerygma is deliverance from sin to eternal life.

Accordingly then Ambrose can say, "we show forth His death when we pray",¹¹ meaning our prayers are directed to a living Lord who died as we will die, in the flesh, and who was raised to a new life, a new existence, "where there is no succession of faults, no enticement to sin".¹²

The Kerygma Fulfilled

Since for Ambrose "the death of Christ" is the saving event which signifies His victory over sin on behalf of all, the ritual which reenacts this event and in which His death is declared must be the central affirmation of the kerygma in the "this-worldly" sinful life of the Christian Community. It is "that" life in the midst of "this" life - the resurrected spiritual body of Christ which will be the destiny of his followers present here and now in this existence, providing sustenance, hope, and faith for the "this-worldly" Christian. So Ambrose explains:

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II, 46, in Ibid., X, 181.

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II, 123, in Ibid., X, 195.

But yet all those who ate that food died in the wilderness, but that food which you receive, that living Bread which came down from heaven, furnishes the substance of eternal life; and whosoever shall eat of this Bread shall never die, and it is the Body of Christ.¹³

So this Sacrament, which Ambrose calls "the Sacrifice", is the vehicle for both proclaiming the kerygma, "His death is victory" and for participating in the spiritual bread which sustains the Christian in this sinful world until his own death finally releases him from it.

Thus the creedal-like statement by Ambrose which proclaims the kerygma in terms of the death of Jesus Christ, also carries with it the understanding of the resurrection of the body after the manner of the Lord's resurrection as the guarantee of the final and absolute deliverance from the power of sin.

II. AUGUSTINE

If ever a champion stepped onto the stage of world history in defense of any cause, such a champion was Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, defender of orthodoxy, one of the four, great Latin Fathers of the Catholic Church. He was a rhetorician and philosopher, pagan, Manichean, and Christian, bishop, theologian and author, whose thought has remained alive and influential down to our own time.

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"On the Mysteries", Chap VIII, 47, in Ibid., X, 323

Augustine was one of those men who seemed to produce timeless material, or else was born ahead of his time. For example, Durant says about him:

He discussed with diffidence and subtlety the nature of time. He anticipated Descartes' "Cognito, ergo sum": to refute the Academics, who denied that man can be certain of anything, he argued: "Who doubts that he lives and thinks?...For if he doubts, he lives." He presaged Bergson's complaint that the intellect, through long dealing with corporeal things, is a constitutional materialist; he proclaimed, like Kant, that the soul is the most directly known of all realities, and clearly stated the idealistic position - that since matter is known only through mind, we cannot logically reduce mind to matter. He suggested the Schopenhaurian thesis that will, not intellect, is fundamental in man.¹⁴

His sermons "formed, throughout the Middle Ages, 'the reservoir which fed richly for a thousand years the piety and preaching of priest and monk and saint'".¹⁵ As a consequence of this basic and broad impact of Augustine upon Christendom, his exposition of the Christian kerygma is of particular importance to our study.

¹⁶ It is said that Ambrose opened up the Scriptures for Augustine, when he interpreted Paul's statement "The letter kills, but the spirit makes alive" (II Cor. 3:6) as authority for an allegorical or spiritual reading of

¹⁴ Will Durant, The Age of Faith (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950), p. 71

¹⁵ Aurelius Augustinus, Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1959), p. xi.

¹⁶ Cf. Robert M. Grant, A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible (New York: Macmillan, 1963), p. 110.

difficult Biblical passages. Grant adds this for our help:

...and as he explained the difficulties of the Bible, the "mystical veil" was removed from Augustine's eyes. the things which taken literally seemed to teach perversity now could be understood spiritually.¹⁷

Thus Augustine found a methodology which permitted him to move fully into the Christian religion accepting the Bible as authoritative for his faith and life. But Grant says:

Like other interpreters in the orthodox tradition he continued his search for an all-inclusive principle by means of which he could determine what was allegorical and what was not. Moreover, in the course of his theological development he came to take more passages of scripture literally.¹⁸

Augustine accepted and upheld the authority of "the rule of faith", inspired by Irenaeus which says that the standard of correct interpretation "is the rule of faith as preserved in churches in the apostolic succession".¹⁹

This authority or guide became one foundation of interpretation for Augustine along with the "law of love" which he describes this way:

If it seems to anyone that he has understood the divine scripture or any part of them, in such a way that by that understanding he does not build up that double love of God and neighbor, he has not yet understood.²⁰

¹⁷

Ibid.

¹⁸

Ibid.

¹⁹

Ibid., p. 72.

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Quoted by Ibid., p. 111.

All of the sermons we will study were delivered by Augustine during the Lenten and Easter seasons; he usually preached to a congregation made up of Christians, heretics, Jews, and pagans.

The Kerygma Proclaimed - Sermon 231

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"Take my death as a pledge", would have been a most appropriate title for this Easter sermon, for Augustine is concerned with placing the death of man in its proper relationship to the life of man as life is to be known in and through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We find the kerygma expressed in traditional terms by Augustine as follows:

Christ came to our miseries. He was hungry and
thirsty; He was weary and He slept; He worked wonders
and He suffered evils; He was scourged,
crowned with thorns,
covered with spittle,
beaten with cudgels,
fixed to a cross,
wounded with a lance,
placed in a tomb.

But he rose again on the third day when His work was finished and death was dead.²³

First, we hear Augustine affirming in earthy terms

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Augustinus, op. cit., p. XVII.

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22
Augustinus, "On The Resurrection According to St.
Mark" in Ibid., p. 209.

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Ibid., p. 208.

that Christ was a man, for he hungered, thirsted and grew weary. Secondly, he suffered greatly, perhaps because he worked wonders, i.e., he was misunderstood, not recognized as a good man, but rather as an evil man. Thirdly, he was cruelly and shamefully killed; and on the third day he rose again. This is the traditional core statement of the kerygma, but Augustine now provides us with the key to his understanding of the significance of this saving message. He says simply that the work of Jesus was to die, for in his dying Christ killed death. What a poet this man was.

Now it is equally clear that for Augustine as for Ambrose, "his death includes the total event of death/resurrection inasmuch as the victory Christ achieved in killing death could only be made manifest in his resurrection. But we must emphasize that for Augustine the Christ who died upon the cross was truly man who ate and drank and worked exactly as any man who ever lived in this world. For obviously the death which was killed had to be the very same death which man experiences, else the kerygma would not be proclaiming a real saving message to man who so desperately was in need of salvation.

So Augustine can interpret Rom. 4:25 which says, "who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification", to mean "He was crucified, so that on the cross He might show the destruction of our old man; and He rose again so that he might point out the newness of our

life".²⁴ Clearly then this is a literal interpretation of Paul's statement with the "death of the old man" meaning for Augustine the end of the time or life of sin, and our "justification" means for Augustine, the awareness or possibility or understanding of a life which is completely new and which is available to man through faith.

Augustine forcefully and dramatically draws the fundamental distinction between "this" life of ours lived in the world subject to sin, evil and death which Christ accepted for himself; and "that" life, i.e., the new life which the resurrected Christ lives, when he says:

He showed you what you ought to attend to, if you wish to be happy, for here on earth you cannot be happy. In this life you cannot be happy; no one can...If Christ had happiness here, so also will you. But notice what He found in this land of your death. When He came from another region, what did He find here except what abounds here? With you He ate what is plentiful in the cellar of your wretchedness. He drank vinegar here; He had gall too.

However, He has invited you to His own table abounding in all good things, the table of heaven, the table of the angels where He Himself is the bread.²⁵

Gall and vinegar and death are served at the table of "this" life compared with the good things which are served at the table of "that" life, the living Bread, at the table of heaven.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 205.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 208.

Augustine describes this new life in the first person as he puts these words on the lips of the resurrected Christ:

I invite you to My life where no one dies, where life is truly blessed, where food is not corrupted, where it refreshes and does not fail.²⁶

How? "Believe, just believe that you will come to the good things of My table inasmuch as I did not scorn the poor things of your table.....Take my death as a pledge."²⁷

Of extreme importance in understanding Augustine's thought and his brilliance as a preacher of the Christian gospel is his affirmation that though there is such a radical difference between "this" life and "that" life, it is possible to experience this new life as Christ is now living it - the quality of eternal life here in the midst of this temporal life. And it is clear that Augustine is referring to the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist when the community of the faithful gather around the table where the Christ is present as the living Bread, and where His death is reenacted in the ritual of the Sacrifice. This is the death which signifies the true life.

Moreover, the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is a new life for those who believe in Jesus, and this is the sacrament of His Passion and Resurrection..... For with good reason, life came to death; with good reason, He, the Fountain of Life, whence one drinks in order to live, drank this chalice when He was under no obligation to do so.²⁸

²⁶

Ibid., p. 209.

²⁷

Ibid.

²⁸

Ibid., p. 204.

In summary the, Augustine proclaimed the absolute victory of Christ over sin and death, and this victory he will share willingly and gladly with all who hear and accept the kerygma. Further, although "this" life holds out no hope for happiness, it is possible to experience the new life in the midst of this life, as the believer participates in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist as celebrated by the Catholic Church.

The Kerygma and Reality - Sermon 227

In this short sermon, Augustine is fulfilling a promise he made to a group of newly baptized Christians to instruct them in the meaning of the Sacrament of the Lord's table. He says in summary:

Let the Sacrament not appear of trifling value to you because you look upon it. What you see passes; but the invisible, that which is not seen, does not pass; it remains. Behold, it is received; it is eaten; it is consumed. Is the body of Christ consumed? Is the Church of Christ consumed? Are the members of Christ consumed? God forbid! Here they are cleansed; there they will be crowned. Therefore, what is signified will last eternally, even though it seems to pass. Receive, then, so that you may ponder, so that you may possess amity in your heart; so that you may always lift up your heart. Let your hope be, not on earth, but in heaven; let your faith be firm and acceptable to God. Because you now believe what you do not see, you are going to see there where you will rejoice eternally.²⁹

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Augustinus, "Sermon 227", in Ibid., p. 198.

This long quote which is the conclusion of the sermon, directly points to what is accomplished for the believer, in and through the Sacrament; namely, to be cleansed from sin. And what is signified by the Sacrament is the new life in Christ, or in the life he lives, and this is eternal. Thus, the Sacrament is the embodiment of the "passover" kerygma for Augustine in its being the "Holy Sacrifice of God", and its result is to cleanse the Christian from sin in order that he might receive the gift of eternal life. Further, he again lifts up the radical difference between "here" and "there": the visible world compared to the invisible; earth against heaven; "here they are cleansed, there they will be crowned;" ³⁰ here we are blind, there we will see. This contrast between the two "worlds" in terms of sight and visibility is most enlightening, for it is stated in paradoxical terms i.e., in this realm of the visible we are sightless, and in the realm of the invisible we will see. Thus, Augustine affirms that the true reality is with God who is hidden and invisible to us as we participate in "this" life which is sin inclined. Our sure touch with the reality of "that" life comes to us in and through the Body of Christ as it gathers around the table to partake of the "living

Bread" in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at which time sin has been excluded.

The Kerygma Fulfilled - Sermon 232

This sermon was delivered by Augustine the day after he preached Sermon 231 which we studied first. It is important to us for here Augustine really presses the possibility of "living well", here in "this" life, and in so doing focuses upon the perennial problem of Christianity --the power of sin in men's lives.

The kerygma is stated as follows:

Peter had said that He (Christ) was the Son of the living God, and yet he feared that He would die, although He was the Son of God and had come for that very purpose, that is, to die. If he had not come to die, how could we live?³¹

Here Augustine again emphasizes the principal work of Jesus Christ in terms of his death which he explains in two ways:

1. Since Jesus Christ was with God from all eternity, he could not know death for death is a non-being with God. Death belongs to this world as the concomitant of sin. Now to save man, i.e., to redeem him from the power of sin and death, "He accepted the death merited by our misdeeds that he might give us life by his merits."³² Thus, we find

³¹ Augustine, "Sermon 232 - On the Resurrection of Christ According to St. Luke" in Ibid., p. 213.

³² Ibid.

Augustine explicating an atonement theory of salvation. In another sermon he says, "He offered sacrifice for our sins. Where did he find the offering, the pure victim that he would offer? Because he could find no other, he offered himself".³³

2. And by the exchange theory, that he became man, taking on flesh and blood which automatically means death in order that man might become like God, i.e., to live with him eternally. Thus, "He accepted from us here below what He would offer for us....He himself was life for us; we were death for Him".³⁴ Here Augustine speaks allegorically, in that the life Christ gives for us in "this" worldly terms means his death, and in the category of "otherness" means he gives to us his kind of life, eternal life. Thus, the work can be expressed in terms of a simple confession, "He died for us, that we might live", which is to be understood as a trade; we gave him death and He gave us life. In addition, Augustine clarifies for us his understanding of the nature of man as finite, mortal man and that this is absolute, for the Incarnation, the enfleshing of the Word of God, had to lead Jesus to death. The resurrection is the other half of the saving

³³ Aurelius Augustinus, "Seventh Homily - John 4:4-12," Later Works (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1955) p. 316-317.

³⁴ Augustinus, Sermons..., p. 213.

message for it obviously completes the transaction; it is the life which he gives to us in return for the death we gave him on the cross.

Augustine again refers to the Sacrament when he discusses the vital result of Christ's work, man's salvation, with these words:

Now, then, my dearly beloved, hear about the great sacrament which we appreciate. He walked with them; he shared their hospitality; He broke bread with them; and He was not recognized (cf. Luke 24:21-31), Let us not say that we do not recognize Christ; we know Him if we believe; we possess Him if we believe. They had Christ at their table; we have Him in our soul.³⁵

So it is that the Christian possesses Christ in his soul insofar as he possesses or experiences the "new" life which is Christ's life.

Augustine affirms that the new life in Christ can be known in "this" life as he says, "...that the risen Christ is in us if we live well, if our former evil life is dead, and if a new life is daily making progress."³⁶ And with this latter statement we are granted insight to Augustine's understanding of sanctification and justification. Christian man is to travel an upward journey of sanctification in "this" life so that at death he has approached a

³⁵

Ibid., p. 215.

³⁶

Ibid., p. 216.

level of life near to God, Death then is the translation from "this" life to "that" life, and justification takes place at the level of God.

How else can we explain Augustine's extreme concern and feeling regarding those penitents who fail to keep their vows? "If sins continue to be committed, their name is a mistake; their guilt remains.....Hence what ought to be a place of humility becomes a place of iniquity."³⁷ Thus, we find Augustine standing firm on his faith and conviction that the conversion to the new life does take place here; death has been exchanged for life, sin for holiness, and Christians who are already saved from "this" world must be what they are. In Bultmann's terms, "The indicative is the foundation for the imperative",³⁸ and the faith-bestowed possibility of living the life Christ lives must be grasped by living well, i.e., "to seek the things that are above, not the things that are on earth" (Col. 3:2).³⁹

Augustine appeals to his hearers in a dramatic

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Ibid.

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Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), I, 333.

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Augustinus, "Sermon 231", p. 206; Augustine like Bultmann uses this text to help explain the paradox of present, and yet future - or future and yet present.

closing exhortation which illustrates our above comments.

He says:

What shall I do, since I have become a worthless song, repeating my petition, 'Change yourselves'. The end of life is uncertain. Every man walks about at his own risk. Why do you delay to live well, thinking that life will be long? You are planning on a long life; do you not fear a sudden death? But (you say) it may be long; and I, meanwhile, look for one penitent and do not find one. How much better will a long good life be than an evil one?.....

Among your goods you wish for nothing evil except yourself....Before God I rend my garments in fear lest I be rebuked for not having spoken thus. I am performing my duty; I seek results from you; I wish to get joy, not money, from your good works..... My joy, my solace, and even my breathing-in of dangers during these trials are nothing unless your life is good. I beseech you, my brethren, if you are unmindful of yourselves, have pity on me.⁴⁰

Thus it is that we find Augustine following in the Pauline tradition affirming the paradox of the "already" but "not yet". It is clear that the Christian's actions and concern for "living well" in this life is extremely important to Augustine and to the Catholic Church. Apparently his followers and listeners must have had a most difficult time meeting Augustine's expectations, for he looked and looked and failed to find one penitent. Certainly for Augustine the life a Christian lives now is indicative of what will be in store for him after death. "Do you not fear a sudden death" implies that the Christian

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Augustinus, "Sermon 232...", pp. 216-217.

must be in good standing now, penitent and forgiven, participating in the Christ-like life offered by the Catholic Church and its Sacraments.

In his great anti-Pelagian essay, "The Spirit and The Letter", Augustine is concerned with explaining why it is that though the achievement of "sinlessness" was a theoretical possibility for man with the aid of God's grace, no one in fact had achieved such a state of living except for Jesus Christ. So we know that Augustine is not exhorting his followers to "live well" in terms of expecting them to achieve a life of sinlessness, but he is expecting them to join in the fight against sin wholeheartedly and to acknowledge their dependence upon God's grace by means of repentance.

In commenting upon Paul's succinct promise of salvation in Romans 10:9, "....if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved;" Augustine explains how he relates the "already" with the "not yet" when he says:

And righteous, inasmuch saved. For by the same faith we believe that God raises up us also from the dead: for the time present in spirit, so that in newness of his grace we live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world (Titus 2:12), and afterwards even in our flesh which shall rise again unto immortality. Such shall be the reward earned for flesh by spirit, which goes before it in a spiritual resurrection, that is, in justification.....By faith of Jesus Christ is granted to us both the little beginning of salvation in possession,

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and its perfecting which we await in hope.

So Augustine affirms that we can taste the experience of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ "already" as we await its perfecting in hope in the future.

III. SUMMARY

The kerygma as proclaimed by Ambrose and Augustine is one which speaks of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, yet which brings the two elements together under the one category of death. It is in Christ's dying that he performs the effective work of redeeming man from his predicament of a life always subject to the power of sin, and to the finality of death.

Ambrose described death in terms of a transition from "this" life to "that" life, although holding that the resurrection of the body would take place at the end of the age.

Both men affirmed a kerygma which was dependent upon the same two elements of the "passover" message, namely, Christ's suffering and death resulting in the deliverance of faithful man from sin and death. And both held that the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist or the Holy Sacrifice was a reenactment of the great saving event, and through

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Augustinus, "The Spirit and The Letter", in his Later Works, p. 235.

it the Christian can taste the life which Christ now lives.

But the fact remains that Christians continued to sin, despite the fact that the kerygma proclaimed Christ's victory over sin, and the imparting of a "new life" possibility to his followers in the present. Accordingly, we now can understand the formal ecclesiastical structure which came into existence as the Church continued its efforts to bring the power of sin in Christians' lives under control. Coercion and threats; appeals and exhortations; confession and penance; monasticism and celibacy; preaching and sacrament; merits and indulgences all are brought to bear in the attempt to assure, convince and to know that the new life in Christ, with sin under control, was a real possibility for man living in this world.

But man continued to sin and to die - and some eleven hundred years later a new religious genius was to make another valiant effort to resolve the dilemma. Martin Luther was to find much in Augustine to help him understand the meaning of salvation for man, and to understand Pauline theology. He discerned the impossibility of man moving upward in righteousness and holiness to be justified on the level of God - rather man somehow must be justified on his own level. For Luther, Christian man is "always a sinner, always penitent, always righteous".⁴² And it is to

⁴²
Martin Luther, Lectures on Romans, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), p. 322.

Luther, the great Reformer, we will turn in the next chapter for further insight into this new attempt to interpret the Kerygma.

CHAPTER VI

MARTIN LUTHER - PROPHET TO A NEW AGE

The Kerygma as Covenant

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When Heinrich Bornkamm can point to Luther's doctrine of baptism as the key to understanding his thought and his theology, we would do well to turn to Luther's sermon on baptism for our introduction to his preaching. This sermon, part of a trilogy on the sacraments, was delivered in 1519 when his theology was still in its creative process - fresh and free from the political and ecclesiastical conflicts which were soon to roll in upon him.

It is clear that the very richness and quantity of Luther's sermons and teachings present us with special problems of selection. Our purpose, however, clearly remains unchanged, i.e., to seek out the kerygma in Luther's preaching, and to understand how he interprets it and proclaims it. Accordingly, we will start with this sermon on baptism which has long been recognized as a work of fundamental importance, and which "has found a place in

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Heinrich Bornkamm, Luther's World of Thought (St. Louis: Concordia, 1958), p. 103.

all major collections of Luther's works".²

Title: THE HOLY AND BLESSED SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Date: 1519 - published Wittenberg, Johann Grunenberg,
November 9, 1519.

We hear the kerygma proclaimed in this sermon indirectly and implicitly in terms of a concept of covenant. Obviously, for Luther it is the covenant or promise made to man in and through the Christ-event, i.e., the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ which is the heart of the Christian's hope of salvation.

Luther, therefore, lets his understanding of the sacrament of baptism carry the fundamental thrust of his theology. In this teaching sermon he discloses the entire sweep of history from creation to the eschaton, and reveals to us the fundamental elements of this great drama.

The drama of history necessarily takes place here in this world, God's creation, which exists under his sovereign rule. So Luther refers to Noah and the flood as a foreshadowing of baptism, when the whole world was drowned, except for Noah, his three sons and their wives. He says,

That the people of the world were drowned signifies that in baptism sins are drowned. But that the eight in the ark, with animals of every sort, were preserved,

²
Martin Luther, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), XXXV, 27.

signifies - as St. Peter explains in his second epistle (II Pet. 2:5; cf. I Pet. 3:20-21) that through baptism man is saved.³

Luther continued this line of thought by delineating the period or time of baptism as extending from the birth of Christ until the day of judgment. Thus we are to understand that this period or time of baptism is the time for salvation.

Now, that from which man is to be saved is sin and guilt which is here in this world with man as he lives his life here in history. Accordingly then, for Luther the fundamental elements which make up this sweep of history are first, God; secondly, this world, God's creation; thirdly, man; and last but not least, sin and guilt.

The crux of the Christian religion for Luther is, therefore, contained in the following passages from this sermon:

For this reason, as I have said above, it should be properly understood and known that our flesh, so long as it lives here, is by nature wicked and sinful..... In the first birth we are spoiled; therefore he thrusts us into the earth again by death, and makes us over at the Last Day, that we may be perfect and without sin.

This plan, as has been said, begins in baptism, which signifies death and the resurrection at the Last day. Therefore, so far as the sign of the sacrament and its significance are concerned sins and the man are both already dead, and he has risen again; and so the sacrament has taken place. But the work of the sacrament has not yet been fully done, which is to say that death and resurrection at the Last Day are still before us.

³ Ibid., XXXV, 32.

A baptized person is therefore sacramentally altogether pure and guiltless. This means nothing else than he has the sign of God; that is to say, he has the baptism by which it is shown that his sins are all to be dead, and that he too is to die in grace and at the Last Day is to rise again to everlasting life, pure, sinless, and guiltless.⁴

Fundamentally then, Luther says man lives in this world as sinful man, i.e., prideful, lustful, impure, greedy and the like, naturally or ontologically; but that God has provided a means, a plan or better a covenant which enables man to escape from the eternal death which is the inevitable result of sin through his dying in grace, i.e., physical or natural death which really terminates the power of sin over the individual's life once and for all, and the awaiting then of the general resurrection at the Last Day "to everlasting life, pure, sinless, and guiltless".⁵

Now, we must come to understand what Luther means by "dying in grace", for after all this is the critical condition of man for salvation. It is clear that Luther's concept of covenant bears on our question, for to die in grace would mean to die within the covenant of baptism, or to be participating in the sacramental life of baptism occurs. How does one participate in this sacramental life?

⁴ Ibid., XXXV, 32-33.

⁵ Ibid., XXXV, 33.

Luther answers this question as follows:

In the first place you give yourself up to the sacrament of baptism and to what it signifies. That is, you desire to die, together with your sins, and to be made new at the Last Day.....From that hour he begins to make you a new person.

In the second place you pledge yourself to continue in this desire, and to slay your sin more and more as long as you live, even until your dying day. This too God accepts. He trains and tests you all your life long with many good works and with all kinds of sufferings. Thereby he accomplishes what you in baptism have desired, namely, that you may become free from sin, and⁶ rise again at the Last Day, and so fulfill your baptism.

Thus, we see the response of the believer to be one of fighting sin at every turn of the way down to his dying day when finally the battle ceases, and he awaits the resurrection at the Last Day.

Now, Luther is quite clear and precise in drawing a distinction between sacramental existence and actual existence. And there is no question that he takes both the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper with great seriousness. They are for Luther "God-given signs in which God Himself is present and active".⁷ Sacramentally a baptized person is altogether pure and guiltless, yet actually he is not without sin. This seems to be another way of saying that the quality of life to be lived after the resurrection on the Last Day is, in some fashion,

⁶

Ibid.

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Bornkamm, op. cit., p. 100.

presaged in the sacraments - "that" life finds expression through the sacraments here in "this" life - and the dynamic for man which holds the two together is faith.

Faith means that one firmly believes all this: that this sacrament not only signifies death and the resurrection at the Last Day, by which a person is made new to live without sin eternally, but also that it assuredly begins and achieves this; that it establishes a covenant between us and God to the effect that we will fight against sin and slay it, even to our dying breath, while he for his part will be merciful to us, deal graciously with us, and - because we are not sinless in this life until purified by death - not judge us with severity."⁸

Although Luther has not specifically identified the work of Jesus Christ as fully responsible for making this covenant of baptism between God and sinful man possible, it is obvious that he is really preaching that faith in the kerygma, i.e., Jesus Christ who died and was raised from the dead delivers us from the consequences of sin, namely, eternal death. The basic elements of the kerygma are voiced over and over again in this sermon by Luther: suffering, death, resurrection, and overcoming sin, "Now there is no shorter way or manner than through baptism and the work of baptism which is suffering and death;"⁹ and in the opposite mood he can say, "For in the easy life no one

⁸ Luther, op. cit., XXXV, 35.

⁹ Ibid., XXXV, 39.

learns to suffer, to die with gladness, to get rid of sin, and to live in harmony with baptism. Instead there grows only love of this life and horror of eternal life, fear of death and unwillingness to blot out sin".¹⁰ Thus we hear Luther telling us that God has acted in such a way that man, through faith, can die in grace, and be raised at the Last Day to eternal life.

The Efficacy of the Gospel

But to hear Luther speak directly of the Gospel we must turn to another of his writings, and introduction to a series of sermons, the so-called "Wartburg Postil", and our study of it follows,

Title: A BRIEF INSTRUCTION ON WHAT TO LOOK FOR AND EXPECT IN THE GOSPELS.

Date: 1522

Here Luther quickly identifies for us what he considers to be "the Gospel in a nutshell", namely, Paul's succinct statement in Romans 1:1-4, which Luther abstracts in one sentence, "The Gospel is a story about Christ, God's and David's son, who died and was raised and is established as Lord".¹² Luther makes the point that since there is only

¹⁰

Ibid.

¹¹

Martin Luther, "A Brief Instruction", in his Works, XXXV, 118.

¹²

Ibid.

one Christ, there obviously is only one Gospel despite the fact that it may be described in a number of ways. And then he adds that the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is the pure Gospel, for in it Isaiah explains how Christ should die for us and bear our sins. He says, "And I assure you, if a person fails to grasp this understanding of the Gospel, he will never be able to be illuminated in the Scripture nor will he receive the right foundation".¹³

In his Thesis No. 62, Luther states that "The true treasure of the Church is the Holy Gospel of the glory and the grace of God",¹⁴ so that when we hear him point to Isaiah 53 as the outstanding example of the meaning of this Holy Gospel, namely, that Christ died for us and bears our sins, then we can agree with Bornkamm who identifies the forgiveness of sins as Luther's greatest treasure.¹⁵

So it is that Luther has based his theology upon this real problem of sin -- the very problem that had plagued Christendom since its beginning -- how to experience, explain or understand the life of the new being here in the midst of this old world.

¹³

Ibid., XXXV, 118-119.

¹⁴

Martin Luther, "The Ninety-Five Thesis", in John Dillenberger, (ed.) Martin Luther, (Garden City, Anchor Books, 1961), p. 496.

¹⁵

Bornkamm, op. cit., p. 112.

Luther explains the Gospel and the significance of Jesus Christ for man in a two-fold manner, first as a gift and secondly, as an example. So he says:

The chief article and foundation of the Gospel is that before you take Christ as an example, you accept and recognize him as a gift, as a present that God has given you and that is your own. This means that when you see or hear of Christ doing or suffering something, you do not doubt that Christ himself, with his deeds and suffering belongs to you. On this you may depend as surely as if you had done it yourself; indeed as if you were Christ himself.¹⁶

Now it seems reasonable to pose the question to Luther, "So what if Christ belongs to me; what does this mean?" And he answers forthrightly:

See, when you lay hold of Christ as a gift which is given you for your very own and have no doubt about it, you are a Christian. Faith redeems you from sin, death, and hell and enables you to overcome all things.¹⁷

Therefore, once a person becomes a Christian, i.e., believes without doubt the proclamation about the Christ and his work to redeem man from eternal death, then it is possible for the believer to take Christ as an example and follow him in service to one's neighbor which means a willingness to suffer all things on his behalf. Christ is the gift, which is to say that in the proclamation of the Word of God the hearer meets the Christ, a free gift from God to sinful man; man's only response is to accept the

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Luther, op. cit., XXXV, 119.

¹⁷

Ibid., XXXV, 120.

gift and this is faith. Thus faith is man's response to God's call, and it too is a free gift from a gracious God.

In this same sermon Luther again explains his understanding of the kerygma as follows:

When you open the book containing the Gospels and read or hear how Christ comes here or there, or how someone is brought to him, you should therein perceive the sermon or the Gospel through which he is coming to you, or you are being brought to him. For the preaching of the Gospel is nothing else than Christ coming to us, or we being brought to him. When you see how he works, however, and how he helps everyone to whom he comes or who is brought to him, then rest assured that faith is accomplishing this in you and that he is offering your soul exactly the same sort of help and favor through the Gospel. If you pause here and let him do you good, that is, if you believe that he benefits and helps you, then you really have it. Then Christ is yours, presented to you as a gift.¹⁸

Now I think the above passage is most enlightening and fundamental for understanding Luther, for here we find him equating simply and clearly the meeting of man with the resurrected Christ as the hearing of the Gospel being preached. So we find here evidence of Luther's absolute conviction that the preached Word of God is central and basic and vital to the Christian faith.

John W. Doberstein in his Introduction to Volume 51 of Luther's Works says about Luther's preaching:

For him, therefore, to preach Christ is not merely a hermeneutical principle or a homiletical method of stressing the kerygma, but an inner necessity of the

¹⁸

Ibid., XXXV, 121.

message itself. Preaching continues the battle begun by the saving event and is itself the saving event.What it all boils down to is a searching challenge to the preacher to believe that God speaks through preaching and preaching alone.¹⁹

Without loading Luther's words with too heavy a burden we also find contained within them an appeal for belief based on pragmatic grounds: "To be a Christian is good for you and it is possible to see this good in the lives of the faithful around you" might be an appropriate paraphrase. So faith for Luther, as expressed in this sermon, means a firm belief that Christ "benefits and helps you", or really, to believe the Gospel.

The Kerygma Enacted

Luther's sermon on the Lord's Supper which he preached in December of 1518 provides insight to not only his understanding of this sacrament, but also to the priority of the Word of God for sacrament and for faith.

Title: TEN SERMONS ON THE CATECHISM, 1528
THE LORD'S SUPPER

Date: December, 1518

Time and time again, in this short sermon, Luther speaks of forgiveness of sins; there is no question that this is the core and the substance of the kerygma as he proclaims it and understands it. So he says,

¹⁹

Ibid., LI, xx.

If the sacrament is rightly administered, one should preach, first, that the sacrament is the body and blood of the Lord under the bread and wine, as the words say. Secondly, the benefit: it effects the forgiveness of sins, as the words say, "which is shed for the remission of sins."²⁰

We find in this sermon a forthright statement concerning both the power of the Word to make the sacrament truly a sacrament, i.e., Christ is truly present and as such nurtures and helps the believer in his ongoing battle with sin. Bornkamm in describing Luther's doctrine of Holy Communion says that "it is the ultimate deduction of his belief in the reality of forgiveness".²¹

Thus, we find that for Luther the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the kerygma enacted in ritual, the Lord suffers and is broken, his body and blood given up to death in order that those who call him Lord may be delivered from the eternal penalty of Sin. With simplicity and conviction he exhorts his congregation to partake of the sacrament with these words:

But he who is above says: If you want to be a Christian, if you want to have forgiveness of sins and eternal life, then come here! There stands your God; he offers you his body and blood, broken and shed for you. If you want to despise God and neglect the forgiveness of sins, then stay away.....It really grieves me that you are so cold in your attitude toward it. If you will not do it for God's sake and my sake, then do it for the sake of your own necessity, which is exceed-

²⁰

Ibid., LI, 190

²¹

Bornkamm, op. cit., p. 112.

ingly great, namely, your sins and death.

Thus, we see that Luther held an authentic understanding of this sacrament in terms of its being efficacious for the believer partaking of it, and that it speaks in terms of his earlier work on baptism. This sacrament serves to maintain the believer within the covenant of baptism, helping him in his continuing battle against sin. We know that he fought valiantly and bitterly against Zwingli and the Spiritualists' attempt to interpret the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in terms of a spiritual exercise of memory; for once the substance of a religious sacrament is lost, it becomes a vain and empty practice. Rene Guenon explains this for us when he discusses symbolism in reference to Catholic sacramental conceptions. He says:

Moreover, it might be said that every symbol, insofar as it must essentially serve as a support to a conception, is also endowed with a very real efficacy; and the religious sacrament itself, insofar as it is a sensible sign, does indeed play a similar part as support of the "spiritual influence" which will turn the sacrament into an instrument of immediate or deferred psychical regeneration.....From this point of view, a rite is still only a particular kind of symbol: it is, one might say, a symbol "enacted", but only if the symbol is taken for what it really is and not merely considered in its outward or contingent appearance:²³

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Luther, op. cit., LI, 191.

23

Cf. Rene Guenon, Introduction to the Study of the Hindu Doctrines, (London: Luzac, 1945), p. 132.

And this understanding of sacrament is what Luther clung to with desperation, but it would seem that already by 1528 the people were able to see only a vain image, an idol, a superstition in this sacrament, for Luther here threatens reprisals against them if they continue to stay away.

Therefore, take a better attitude now toward the sacrament and also keep your children to it when they come to understanding. For this is how we know which are Christians and which are not. If you will not go, then let the young people come; for us so much depends on them. If you do not do it, we shall take action against you. For even if you adults want to go to the devil, we shall nevertheless seek after your children.²⁴

Within this statement one finds evidence that the popular or folk religion of Protestant Germany perhaps did not really grasp the significance of Luther's break with the legalism and merit system of the established Church, or that this break was only possible because of Luther's radical understanding of the reality of the forgiveness of sins which is made available to sinful man freely through Word and Sacrament. If man is to participate in the redemption and salvation offered freely to him by God through faith in Jesus Christ and his work, then he must die in grace, and to accomplish this one must participate in the sacramental life which is offered by the Church.

²⁴²⁴ Luther, op. cit., LI, 192.²⁵²⁵ Ibid.

"The need (which drives us to the sacrament) is that sin, devil, and death are always present. The benefit is that we receive forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit."²⁵

This conviction he held to the end of his life, for in one of his very last sermons preached in Wittenberg in 1546, he again affirms with vigor his understanding of forgiveness of sins and the efficacy of the sacraments because the Word of God is present within them which truly makes the sacraments what they really are - God's Grace.

He says:

If Christ, the Samaritan, had not come, we should all have had to die. He it is who binds our wounds, carries us into the Church and is now healing us....The sin, it is true, is wholly forgiven, but it has not been wholly purged. If the Holy Spirit must cleanse the wounds daily. Therefore, this life is a hospital; the sin has really been forgiven, but it has not yet been healed.²⁶

And Luther could have added that only physical death brings the end of sin's power and activity in the life of the individual man. So man must wage his battle against sin in this life with all the resources at his disposal, his faith which is kept strong through hearing the Word preached and partaking of the sacrament. Luther frequently exhorts his followers to maintain the fight, i.e.,

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Luther, "The Last Sermon in Wittenberg - 1546", in Ibid., LI, 373.

"...if you follow your lusts you will become a fornicator. Here the Gospel admonishes you: Don't do it, don't follow your evil desires. The sin is forgiven, but see to it that you remain in grace....Thus if a man does not heed the admonition of God to resist the devil when he is tempted, his sin has not been forgiven."²⁷

Luther knows that man loses the battle perhaps most of the time against the "devil", and that in his preaching, he must continually confront the believer with his responsibility and response to the Gospel which saves him. And this response is a wholehearted willingness to fight sin every turn of the way, and to grasp Christ as an example in service and love to one's neighbor. This Christian life here in this world is first and fundamentally grounded in faith which is to rule sovereign in man over will, appetite, and/or especially reason. We hear Luther in this sermon again affirm his trust in the Word as authoritative for the reality of the sacrament, and the subjection of reason to faith when he attacks the antisacramentalistic view with these words:

You just say to him, "Ah, I like what you say; what a learned bride the devil has! But what do you say to this: 'This is my beloved Son, listen to him?' And he says, 'This is my body (Matt. 17:5; 26:26). Go, trot to the privy with your conceit, your reason! Shut up, you cursed whore, do you think you are master over faith, which declares that the true body and the true blood is in the Lord's Supper, and that Baptism is not

²⁷

Ibid., LI, 374.

merely water, but the water of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?" Reason must be subject and obedient to this faith.²⁸

Could anything be more plainer and direct? I think not. Faith is what enables the Christian to get through this earthly life in a condition which will enable him to enjoy the blessings of everlasting life which will be free from sin, guilt, lust and suffering. Certainly for Luther then, nothing could be permitted to challenge faith's authority and sovereignty - not even reason which "is by nature a harmful whore".²⁹

The Kerygma Fulfilled

As in the case of Ambrose, one of the most powerful and revealing sermons preached by Luther was a funeral sermon, and we will conclude our study of Luther with it.

Title: SERMON AT THE FUNERAL OF THE ELECTOR, DUKE JOHN OF SAXONY.

Date: August 18, 1532.

Text: I Thess. 4:13-14.

It is conceivable that the Reformation as a political force might have been stopped had it not been for the dedication and commitment of Elector John of Saxony, and

²⁸

Ibid., LI, 379.

²⁹

Ibid., LI, 376.

the firm stand he took in opposition to Emperor Charles V. at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530. Leopold von Ranke says: "Luther affirms that, had John wavered, not one of his council would have stood firm."³⁰ Ranke then quotes John as saying, "Either deny God or the world, who can doubt which is better? God has made me an elector of the empire, a dignity of which I never was worthy; let Him do with me further according to His good pleasure."³¹ And finally Ranke comments as follows:

In short, the aged prince neither quailed nor wavered. Great events rarely come to pass without those great moral efforts which are the necessary, though hidden germs of new social and political institutions. Elector John continued to declare that the emperor should find him a loyal and peaceful prince in every respect; but that he would never be able to induce him to regard the eternal truth as not the truth, or the imperishable word of God as not God's word.³²

Luther obviously had found a loyal and staunch supporter in John of Saxony, and whose deeds on behalf of the "new" faith help us to understand Luther's moving and dedicated words about him. But more than that in this sermon Luther proclaims the kerygma and expounds his theology with depth, clarity and conviction, as he seeks to come to grips with the reality of physical death in this world.

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Leopold von Ranke, History of the Reformation in Germany (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1905), p. 613.

³¹

Ibid.

³²

Ibid.

In commenting on I Thess. 4:14 which contains the kerygmatic phrase, "that Jesus died and rose again", Luther says about the text:

"He rather speaks more sternly of Christ's death than ours....He calls our death not a death, but a sleep, and Christ's death he calls real death. Thus he attributes to the death of Christ such exceeding power that by comparison we should consider our death a sleep. ...Look at him who is really dead, compared with whom all the other dead are as nothing. They did not die, but he died.....That was a real death, not only in itself, because it was so bitter, ignominious, and grandiose, but also because it is so potent that it has baptized all the other dead, so that now they are called, not dead, but sleepers. And this is true, for we see in the Passion that Christ died as no one else dies or ever will die.³³

The point of his exegesis is that the actual results of Christ's death, which was a real death presumably because it involved a trip to Hell, was that physical death was transmuted from real or total or eternal death into a sleep. The reference to the shameful death of Christ upon the cross, is an indication of its absolute uniqueness. However, Luther seems to have arrived at his conclusion through mental gymnastics which have propositional validity only after his first pre-supposition is made and accepted, i.e., that Paul used the phrase "falling asleep" as a uniquely different experience from natural physical death.

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Luther op. cit., LI, 234.

In discussing man's sorrow and grief over death, he says:

After all, it is only a man that dies, and not even the whole man, but only a part, the body, but here is God's Son himself, here the Lord of creation dies. My death and your death will not have the bitterness which Christ's death had because he is immeasurably different from all other dead, in himself and by reason of his person.³⁴

Here, Luther develops a doctrine of death; man for Luther is body or flesh, and spirit. In physical death, he explains, only the body dies. Of course Luther knows that it is precisely because Christ is God's Son that his death is efficacious for us and therefore a great victory and joy for us; but in his attempt to make the point that we ought not be overly sorrowful when confronting natural death, he almost undercuts the kerygma.

In describing the results of contemplating the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, he provides for us a succinct description of the basic tenets of the Christian religion. Here is what he says:

If you gaze steadfastly at this mirror and image, at Christ the Lord, who died and rose again, you will see where you will go and where those will go who have not fallen asleep in Christ, namely, that God intends to bring with him you and all others who have been baptized and have fallen asleep in Christ, because he has wrapped them in Christ's death and included them in his resurrection and does not intend to leave them lying under the ground, even though for our reason and five senses there is no reason why this should be so,

³⁴

Ibid.

in order that faith may find room and we learn to trust God even in that which we do not see.³⁵

Again we find Luther using the language of the intellect, i.e., look, gaze, contemplate all having the connotation of understanding with the mind. They could also be the language of the mystic who aspires to a direct experience of the risen Christ, but this is doubtful for Luther depends greatly on conceptual, descriptive, literal language, and in this case he follows the proclamation with an appeal for belief, "so anyone who can believe this will have good comfort in his own death and the death of other people."³⁶

In this passage which we have cited, Luther first states the content of faith, the essential truth - the kerygma, "Christ the Lord, who died and rose again"; secondly, baptism follows the confession of faith; thirdly, life in this world is to be lived sacramentally so that when physical death occurs the believer really falls asleep in Christ, i.e., he dies in grace; finally, at the Last Day his body will be resurrected to join with his spirit in eternal life with God. And the total life of the Christian is lived out of faith - faith which trusts an invisible God, a trust which includes an affirmation of the

³⁵

Ibid.

³⁶

Ibid., LI, 236.

absurd notion, i.e., absurd to our reason and senses, that the body will rise again.

Luther differentiates between two kinds of death, this death of the body which he likens unto an animal or even a childish death, and a real or manly death which is the suffering experienced by the Christian in his heart when he is persecuted by the devil for his firm faith in any public confession of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. So Luther describes John's real death with these words,

For you all know how, following Christ, he died two years ago in Augsburg and suffered the real death, not only for himself, but for us all, when he was obliged to swallow all kinds of bitter broth and venom which the devil had poured out for him. This is the real, horrible death, when the devil wears a man down. There our beloved elector openly confessed Christ's death and resurrection before the whole world and he stuck to it, staking his land and people, indeed his own body and life, upon it.³⁷

Thus, the real death for Luther is the inner struggle of the heart which bears the suffering and rejection of the world for its steadfast faith in Jesus Christ, and which occurs throughout life in this world, and is an indication that the baptism into Christ's death remains effective. So the physical death of a Christian is only an end of man's five senses, as in a sleep which "will be the end of

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Ibid., LI 237.

all who believe in the death and resurrection of Christ and confess the same; they will finally rise with him and be brought with Christ".³⁸

Conclusion

Luther proclaimed the kerygma with conviction and power, grounded in an absolute loyalty to the Word of God as contained in Holy Scripture. But in addition, "Luther holds that the Word and the sacrament are inseparably united".³⁹ He stands firmly on his conviction that the sacraments are really sacraments, made holy and efficacious by the Word, so that the believer may indeed know the forgiveness of sins which is at the heart of the Gospel.

Luther was proclaiming the kerygma in the same Biblical language used by the Christian Church over the centuries, but reexpressed or reinterpreted, it spoke to the existential situation of his times. The failure of the elaborate ecclesiastical system of sacrament and law, penance and punishment reached the breaking point for Luther with the sale of the Jubilee indulgence. The kerygma, as Luther heard it, proclaimed the glorious news that Christ had already performed the necessary work of

³⁸

Ibid., II, 243.

³⁹

Regin Prenter, Spiritus Creator (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1953), p. 158.

salvation once and for all on the cross, and it was clear to Luther that this work of Christ was directly involved with the condition of man as sinner. In essence whatever Christ did, and however he did it, the work was done so that the law, merits, good and bad, better or worse, are tools of the devil used to seduce man into thinking he has a part in his own salvation. No so, Luther could say, how can he when he never stops being a sinner - only Christ's righteousness is adequate to overwhelm the sin of mankind.⁴⁰

Thus, the elements of the "passover" kerygma understood in a radical sense are still evident in Luther's preaching, but with a significant shift from the primitive time. Man is delivered not from sin or the power of sin over his life in the body, but rather he is delivered from the consequences of sin - eternal death. It is the guilt of sin, the liability for punishment, that has been worked out by Christ in his death upon the cross. The guilt of original sin is assuaged completely in and through the sacrament of baptism, and the covenant of grace is maintained through the believer's participation in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and in living a life under the Word of God. Thus, faith is nurtured and strengthened, and the goal of this life, namely, to die in grace is

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Luther, op. cit. LI, 292.

assured. And for Luther this work of Christ is his death upon the cross, the true Paschal Lamb sacrificed for man. The content of faith is this kerygma - Christ died and rose again from the dead.

The whole point of the Gospel as Luther preaches it, is centered in the life everlasting with Christ himself which is to follow the resurrection on the Last Day. This life here in this world is in fact a life of suffering, sacrifice and death, for it must be a continuous battle against the forces of the devil. For Luther, the kerygma opens up man to understanding himself as a penitent sinner who must die spiritually daily, dying to the old self and rising to the new spiritually, receiving God's grace which is forgiveness of sins made possible because Christ has died for us. So proclaims Martin Luther, Christian.

CHAPTER VII

FRIEDRICH DANIEL ERNST SCHLEIERMACHER

A NEW THEOLOGY FOR A NEW MAN

Three centuries separated Schleiermacher from Luther, and the radical difference in the thought expressed in their sermons is evidence of the monumental changes which occurred in European civilization, and in man and his understanding of reality. Politically, Germany was still having trouble with Emperors, Napoleon at the turn of the Nineteenth Century and Charles V in the Sixteenth, and the German nation was still struggling to come into existence.

Intellectually and culturally the revolution had already occurred, and the seeds of humanism planted in the Italian Renaissance had grown in stature to mighty oaks as man's mind opened up countless new areas of thought in science, philosophy, history, politics, sociology, and industry in the eighteenth century.

For the eighteenth century, reason and intellectual freedom were to be the forces which could resolve all of mankind's problems. R. V. Sampson attests that, "every human problem was in principle amenable to, if not soluble by the free play of the intelligence investigating the objective material and exchanging ideas with others in the

pursuit of a common inquiry."¹

The philosophy of the eighteenth century, which is generally called the Enlightenment, was perhaps motivated primarily by a search after knowledge, and an understanding of knowledge itself. Since man is the one who knows, philosophy during this period turned to man, and to the study of mankind.

If we cannot understand the inscrutable mysteries of the world which we have seen, much less the mystery of God whom we have not seen. From the contemplation, therefore, of the world and of God, we must turn our eyes to the more rewarding study of the inner self;...

These are the words Hibben used to suggest the spirit of this age.² The monumental contributions to man's growth and development as a knowing and reasoning creature made by men like Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Voltaire, Rousseau, Leibniz and perhaps culminating in Kant, stagger our imaginations, and participating in the spirit of this age, Friedrich Schleiermacher, a Christian theologian and preacher, made a most significant impact upon Protestantism.

Richard Niebuhr says that, "He broke the stalemate of rationalism and orthodoxy, and set the mind of the

¹
R. V. Sampson, Progress in the Age of Reason (London Heinemann, 1956), p. 227.

²
John Grier Hibben, The Philosophy of the Enlightenment (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), p. 5.

Protestant Church free once more. As such, he holds an undeniable position as a reformer inside Protestantism, the most influential thinker since Calvin".³ Richard B. Brandt cites Schleiermacher's views on religion as unique and new and influential on the development of theological thought for, "he was able to change the emphasis in religious literature from objective doctrine to be believed to the subjective religious experience".⁴

How does Schleiermacher preach the kerygma? We shall turn to three of his sermons, though undated, which reflect his mature thought and were probably preached sometime after 1818.⁵ All were preached during the Easter season, and this determined our choice in that we would expect the kerygma to find its clearest and most powerful expression in them.

The Spiritual Reality of God

Title: The Last Look at Life

Date: Passion Sunday

Text: John 19:30

The kerygma as Schleiermacher preaches it in this

³ Richard R. Niebuhr, Schleiermacher on Christ and Religion (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), p. 6.

⁴ Richard B. Brandt, The Philosophy of Schleiermacher (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941), p. 46.

⁵ Friedrich Ernst Schleiermacher, Selected Sermons (New York: Funk & Wagnells, n.d.), p. 2.

sermon is centered in the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross, indeed it is focused in the precise moment when Jesus uttered his last words, which were according to the text, "...it is finished." Schleiermacher, in his use of the theological concepts of "redemption from sin" and "justification before God", combines them in the total work accomplished by God's saving act in the Christ-event, i.e., Christ's death upon the cross which is necessary for our redemption from sin, and His resurrection from the dead which is essential for our justification before God.⁶ His death, therefore, according to Schleiermacher, accounts for our being set free from our bondage to sin, and we hear Schleiermacher say that in this life of ours here and now, we have a new Lord, the old master has been defeated, locked up or rendered less than ultimate; and Christ's resurrection means for us justification before God, i.e., the assurance of a new life lived with God - Christ lives that we too might live His life. And Schleiermacher's proclamation of the kerygma in these terms is in good orthodox language.

Now then, Schleiermacher continues with these words:

But the spiritual eye of the Savior saw everything finished in the sacred moment of His death; and for this reason that moment is the central point of our

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Ibid., p. 236.

faith. For by His obedience unto death He obtained for us the life-giving Spirit; in that He suffered, He has been crowned with glory and honour.⁷

Here we find insight to Schleiermacher's explication of the meaning of the kerygma to him - it is a message that reveals to man the "facts of life" about reality, and the meaning of sacred moment of the Christ's death is the key to our understanding what this message is really saying to man. We can profitably note three important points in Schleiermacher's words:

1. The meaning which is to be attributed to the death of the Savior is revealed only in terms of a spiritual reality.
2. This spiritual reality is revealed eminently in the death of Jesus, which, therefore, becomes basic and fundamental for our faith.
3. The gift which has been granted to us through His obedience unto death is life - true life which in itself is inseparable from spiritual reality.

Obviously then we must gain some awareness or understanding of the "meaning" which Schleiermacher attributes to the death of Jesus, and to his words, "it is finished".

First, Schleiermacher explains that in this terse statement, Christ has affirmed that the Old Testament revelations have been fulfilled and consummated in His person.⁸ Secondly, "...that He took upon Him our sicknesses

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Ibid.

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Ibid., p. 237.

and that through His pains we are healed; ...it was this⁹ which now in the last look at His life He saw finished". In this final moment of death, the truth came thundering forth to the disciples: this objective visible world of reality is not to be the environment through which the Kingdom of God will be actualized. Rather Schleiermacher says, "...

"...now they knew that His whole work was a purely spiritual work, and that His authority, for which they were to fight and which they were to extend, was no other than that which He, as the Crucified, sets up for Himself in the hearts of the children of men."¹⁰

Thus, the gift of the life-giving Spirit and the acceptance of it by its recipients, through faith, constitute for Schleiermacher the reality of the Kingdom of God. And the response of men acknowledging the Spiritual reality within their hearts is the ongoing work that must be carried on by the Father. As Schleiermacher says:

Although God was in Him, reconciling the world to Himself, yet that world still lay before His eyes unreconciled, enveloped in the darkness and shadows of death; and He presented to His Father only some few who had attached themselves to Him in faith and love as the fruit of His life-work, as those who were chosen out of the world, He thus acknowledged that - though He had done all, yet the direct results were only now

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Ibid., p. 238.

¹⁰

Ibid., p. 240.

beginning, and that it was needful for the Father to complete what the Son could only initiate.¹¹

Thus, we can conclude that Schleiermacher proclaimed a saving message which was a call to service - a call to participate in the reconciling work initiated by the Savior which involves living a life in this world which is dependent upon and lived out of the spiritual reality which is God. Faithful men have been called by the Father to carry on this work -

But to this still imperfect state of fulfillment something connected with the good pleasure and will of God is to be added by each living generation, leaving to the young only its unfulfilled aims; and to this work of the men of his time, everyone who accounts himself a living member of this God - sanctified body is to contribute his share.¹²

Accordingly to be a Christian, for Schleiermacher, means to participate in this work gladly or willingly because in fact it is the true life that redeemed man is to live. And this life is lived here in this world in union with Christ which is to say, living in the reality of His Kingdom which is constituted in the hearts of men, and which is a spiritual reality.

¹¹Ibid., p. 243.

¹²Ibid., p. 246.

The Reality of Sin

Title: "The Death of the Saviour the End of All Sacrifices"

Date: Good Friday

Text: Heb. 10:8-12

We find Schleiermacher proclaiming the kerygma on this Holy day in the following manner:

But how - in what manner and in what sense - sin is taken away through the death of the Saviour - that, my friends, is the great mystery of the fellowship of His death and His life as declared in the Scriptures. For these two positions, that we are buried with Christ in His death, and that we have risen with Him to a new life, cannot be separated from true faith in the Saviour.¹³

Thus, we find Schleiermacher proclaiming the kerygma in the traditional manner - the death and resurrection of Christ, and that in it lies the basis for faith and consequently for the fellowship which is the Church - His body which is raised to a new life. Further, he points to the real mystery of this saving-event - the manner in which sin was overcome by the death of the Saviour.

Schleiermacher has provided us in this sermon with a masterful understanding of the nature of sin, and its manifestation in the behavior of man who is under its dominion. Basically, he describes sin as that condition

¹³

Ibid., p. 257.

of man which was responsible for killing the Christ. It is that self-understanding and attitude toward reality which could see in the sinless Son of God, the true man, only a threat to its well-being and independence. Thus, he interprets I John 2:16, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life", as the condition of man and the world which was responsible for killing Christ.¹⁴

"Lust of the flesh", Schleiermacher tells us means ego satisfaction and development - man's delight in distinction and honor as he lives in the world. Next, he tells us that the "lust of the eyes" means man's mistaken tendency to see only the exterior, the visible structure, the outward appearance, and in seeing this only, to assume that there is nothing more to judge character or reality.

Finally, "pride of life" describes "man's presumptuous self-confidence when he imagines that, in his sagacity and experience of life, he has already possessed himself of what is best and most perfect, and therefore holds the powers unsurpassed to which he owes those possessions".¹⁵

Here we have expressed a modern concept of sin,

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Ibid., p. 254.

¹⁵

Ibid., p. 254-255.

which may be likened to the thought of Reinhold Niebuhr,¹⁶
 who for example can say,

There is a pride of power in which the human ego assumes its self-sufficiency and self-mastery and imagines itself secure against all vicissitude. It does not recognize the contingent and dependent character of its life and believes itself to be the author of its own existence, the judge of its own values and the master of its own destiny.¹⁷

Thus, it is this condition of man which Schleiermacher identifies as being responsible for the death of Christ - this is sin. Accordingly, then the fact that man in faith can identify himself with those who killed the Christ, and that in recognizing Jesus of Nazareth as his Saviour, the Son of God - God Himself - he must at the same time take his stand with the Saviour and turn his back on that condition or self-understanding which had killed Him.

Believers could not have been willing to put the Saviour to death; therefore, their faith must constrain them, otherwise it is no faith, to renounce everything that brought Him to the cross. And thus the old man, everything that manifests the power of sin in us, is crucified with Christ.¹⁸

And the new life is lived here and now, for a new world is perceived in faith, a world dependent upon the spiritual

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Cf. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), Chapters VII and VIII.

¹⁷

Ibid., p. 188.

¹⁸

Schleiermacher, op. cit., p. 257.

reality which is God. This life is one with Christ, i.e., the life which the resurrected Christ is living. And since sin has no part in Christ's life, "So no consciousness of sin can exist alongside of the consciousness of His life in us".¹⁹ In this manner Schleiermacher explains how sin has been overcome and banished from life lived in faith.

The Christian, therefore, has a vocation; he has been called to help build up the Kingdom of God. Schleiermacher includes within his understanding of faith the affirmation that the guilt of the believer's sin has been cancelled by Christ's saving act of obedience unto the cross. He says:

....God no longer looks on us as each of us was in himself and might have remained, but only in the Beloved and as what we have become in Him. Nay, more; if, according to this new covenant, the will of God is put into our hearts and written in our minds, then even He can remember our unrighteousness and our sin no more; but only regards as ours the new life that we live in His Son.²⁰

Schleiermacher has proclaimed the kerygma in this sermon essentially in terms of the saving work effected for faithful man in and through the death of Christ upon the cross. Clearly, he explains the fruits of faith in terms

¹⁹

Ibid., p. 259-260.

²⁰

Ibid., p. 263.

of a new life wherein both the guilt of sin and the power of sin has been really overcome; and this new life is lived by Christians here in this world in fellowship with Christ. The radical difference between this proclamation and that of Luther's is immediately apparent; for Luther the true life in Christ was essentially in the future, in another world, at the end of history, when the faithful would be judged righteous before the mercy seat of God so to live eternally with God in His Kingdom. Schleiermacher preached the true life to be a life saved here and now, and does not even suggest an after-life beyond the grave. We will now turn to an Easter sermon for insight to the significance of the resurrection in his thought.

The Victorious Kerygma

Title: "Christ's Resurrection An Image of Our New Life"

Date: Easter Sunday

Text: Rom. 6:4-8

The proclamation of the kerygma in this sermon is in truth the entire sermon. Schleiermacher finds Paul's baptismal passage in Romans a most suitable text for his understanding of the meaning of Christ's resurrection. This is the thrust of the sermon; namely, to explain to his hearers its meaning and significance for their lives.

In this exposition of Paul's text Schleiermacher presents the resurrection, explaining Paul's account of it.

in straightforward, literal terms; yet the application or interpretation of it for man who hears the proclamation is one which is explained in terms of our self-understanding and awakening to life in this world.

He compares this new life faithful man lives with the resurrection life of Christ from three viewpoints: first, in the manner of His resurrection; secondly, in its whole nature, way, and manner; and finally in its lack of continuity.

In the first section Schleiermacher describes the saving event of Christ's death and resurrection as follows:

In order to appear to His disciples in that glorified form, which already bore in it the indications of the eternal and immortal glory, it was necessary that the Saviour should pass through the pains of death. It was not an easy transformation; it was necessary for Him, though not to see corruption, yet to have the shadow of death pass over Him; and friends and enemies vied with each other in trying to retain Him in the power of the grave; the friends rolling a stone before it, to keep the beloved corpse in safety, the enemies setting a watch lest it should be taken away. But when the hour came which the Father had reserved in His own power, the Angel of the Lord appeared and rolled away the stone from the tomb, and the watch fled, and at the summons of Omnipotence life came back into the dead form.²¹

So using the above form of the resurrection event as a model, Schleiermacher translates it into the event which takes place in man when he responds in faith to the proclamation. First, our natural life corresponds to the

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Ibid., p. 267.

mortal body of Jesus, As Christ's body died, so must our natural life, which is to say that our soul dies to this old life through pain, suffering, and struggle; "The power of sin must be slain in a man by violence; a man must go through the torture of self-knowledge, showing him the contrast between his wretched condition and the higher life to which he is called".²² Here Schleiermacher comes very close to echoing Luther's description of "real death".²³

Secondly, as with the great stone in front of Christ's tomb, so it is that both friend and foe may act to keep the new life from coming into being and manifesting itself to the world. Finally, with the resurrection of Christ, the will of the Father cannot be denied; and in mystery, the soul "arises unseen in that grave-like silence, and cannot be perceived until it is actually present; what is properly the beginning of it is hidden, as every beginning usually is, even from him to whom the life is imparted".²⁴ And Schleiermacher adds:

...the Lord was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and thus also, according to the words of the Saviour, no man comes to the Son except the Father draw him; that same glory of the Father, which then called forth the Saviour from the tomb, and which still awakens

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Ibid., p. 268.

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Cf., Supra, p. 121.

²⁴

Schleiermacher, op. cit., p. 269.

in the soul that has died to sin the new life, like the resurrection life of the Lord.²⁵

Thus Schleiermacher here identifies the Christian's life in this world as the life which the resurrected Lord lives.

In the second section Schleiermacher sees the new life growing in strength and manifesting itself in action in a like manner as Christ's resurrected life grew in strength from his first encounter with Mary Magdalene when he could not permit her to touch him until later when he could permit Thomas to touch his most sensitive spots, the marks left by the nails of the cross, and the spear wound in his side. He says then about the Christian's new life:

No, it is a life of action, and ought to be ever becoming more so; not only being nourished and growing stronger and stronger through the word of the Lord and through heart-communion with Him, to which He calls us, giving Himself to us as the meat and drink of eternal life, but everyone striving to make his new life intelligible to others about him, and to influence them by it.²⁶

Accordingly, Schleiermacher is affirming that the new life is a reality, and is nourished and strengthened both by Word and sacrament, and that it being real, can be communicated to and shared with others. And further, we hear him say that indeed the new life is intended by the Lord to be spent on the world, in the world carrying

²⁵

Ibid., p. 269.

²⁶

Ibid., p. 273.

on the work of the Lord. The Christian then is for Schleiermacher first and foremost, an evangelist, but not a coercive one; for "he who should set himself to force the knowledge of it upon them who should hit upon the extraordinary proceedings in order to attract their attention to the difference between the life of sin and the resurrection life, would not be walking in the likeness of the Lord's resurrection".²⁷

Finally, Schleiermacher cautions his listeners not to expect the experience and reality of this new life, which is like the resurrection life of Christ, to be a continuous one, always present, available, and manifest to the world. He points to the witness from Scripture when the risen Lord vanishes from the sight and fellowship of his disciples as a possible way of understanding the fact that we too lose sight of the new life. He assures his listeners, however, with these words:

But this experience, my dear friends, humbling as it is, ought not to make us unbelieving, as if perhaps our consciousness of being a new creature in Christ were a delusion, and what we had regarded as indications of this life were only morbid and overstrained emotions. As the Lord convinced His disciples that He had flesh and bones, so we may all convince ourselves and each other that this is an actual life; but in that case we must believe that, though in a hidden way and not always present to our consciousness, yet it is always in existence, just as the Lord was still in existence

²⁷

Ibid., p. 274.

even at the times when he did not appear to His disciples; and had neither returned to the grave, nor as yet ascended to heaven.²⁸

Here is the kerygma in Schleiermacher's understanding being proclaimed and reaching a climax in the closing sentences of his sermon, that the new life of faithful man, which has the qualitative character of Christ's resurrection life, is in fact in existence, and because the Christ does indeed live, He is the ever present source of His life-giving power. "For this He rose from the dead by the glory of the Father, that we should be made into the likeness of His resurrection".²⁹ So for Schleiermacher, the kerygma proclaims the reality of a new life available to man, a new life to be lived here in this temporal existence, but which has the quality of being eternal, for it is like the life the living Lord lives.

Conclusion

Perhaps with Schleiermacher we may more clearly discern his dependence upon the intellectual and cultural milieu of his time, and in his magnificent response to the new and dynamic era in which he was living to recognize its impact upon Protestant theology down to our day.

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Ibid., p. 276.

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Ibid., p. 277.

It seems clear that only a radical change in the thought of man about the world in which he lives could provide Schleiermacher with the confidence and faith that life in this world could be good; so good in fact that in faith it becomes like the divine life of Christ. Thus, the influence of Rousseau and Romantics concerning the goodness of the world of nature provided a ground swell of reality which broke upon the shoals of man's intellect and being; and Schleiermacher was sensitive and open to the inbreaking of this new awareness about the world of nature. The result was that Schleiermacher retained nature and grace in an unending dialectic, and he refused to divide the realm of nature from the realm of the super-natural. This thrust of his thinking remained with him throughout his life.

Another idea accented by the Romantics which impressed and affected Schleiermacher was the concept of individuality, particularly as it informed and shaped his understanding of the ideal of friendship. Brandt explains:

The ideal of friendship became an appreciation of how the ideal of human nature is individuated in the personality of a friend, a perception of what the peculiar nature of everyone is in relation to all others, an understanding of how the individuality of a friend supplements one's own, to create a whole and rounded

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Richard R. Niebuhr, op. cit., p. 68.

manifestation of the full nature of mind. This became also the ideal of love. Personal intercourse was to be the touching of all the chords of the other person's mind, the discovery of its hidden recesses. To do so without pain to him is a sign of culture.³¹

Here then are signs to Schleiermacher's understanding of the kerygma as proclaiming that the reality of the spiritual, of the divine life is to be found here in this life of relationships lived in this world. And we have found in his preaching the understanding that Christian faith is the response to the kerygma as a real subjective religious experience; man's inner nature, his soul or spirit, can die to the old, natural life which was a life of sin and be raised to a new life which is the true life for man, free from sin and one with the Lord. So, the faithful man sees the world as the activity, sovereignty and order of the divine ultimate reality which is God, and himself as the individuation of the divine personality, for he lives a life like the resurrection life of the Lord.

Brandt, in assaying Schleiermacher's influence upon Protestant thought, sums up for us his great contributions to our Christian tradition as follows:

He offered a mode of approach to religion more satisfactory to the mind of the nineteenth century, more congruent with its science and philosophy. Therefore largely as a result of his work, the great mass of

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Brandt, op. cit., p. 66.

Protestant theologians of the succeeding generation followed him in his distinction of religion from knowledge and conduct, his break away from dogmas supernaturally transmitted to infallible oracles, his insistence upon the autonomy of religious experience in some sense. Attention was focused on the nature and value of the religious consciousness itself.³²

Already the eighteenth century had provided the basis for Schleiermacher's interpretation of the work Christians are to do reconciling the world to the Kingdom of God. Carl L. Becker explains that a new Heavenly City was created by the eighteenth century philosophers which he describes as follows:

Thus, the Philosophers called on posterity to exorcise the double illusion of the Christian paradise and the golden age of antiquity. For the love of God they substituted love of humanity; for the vicarious atonement the perfectibility of man through his own efforts; and for the hope of immortality in another world the hope of living in the memory of future generations.³³

Schleiermacher's preaching certainly confirms the importance of posterity as a motivation for work to be performed by Christians in the present,³⁴ yet the centrality of the Christ-event for his theology precludes replacing it with a human effort. Niebuhr describes the importance and centrality of Christ for his theology as follows:

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Ibid., p. 307.

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Carl L. Becker, The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932), p. 130.

³⁴

Cf., Supra, p. 131.

His theology is Christo-morphie in two senses. First of all, it asserts that Jesus of Nazareth objectively exhibits what human nature ideally is, although Schleiermacher does not counsel Christians to imitate Jesus in any naive way.....thus, "the redeemer is the measure of human nature". In the second place, he is the historical person whose presence mediated through Scriptures, preaching and the Holy Spirit becomes the abiding occasion for the reorganization and clarifying of the Christian's consciousness of his absolute dependence, of his identity in the world, and of his appropriate actions toward and responses to others.³⁵

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In conclusion, we agree with Brandt that Schleiermacher presented an alternative to orthodox Protestantism more appropriate or in harmony with the intellectual environment of the critical and scientific age to which he spoke. Schleiermacher looked out at the world and saw it in a different light than his forerunners in the Reformed tradition, and he responded to his new insight and understanding about reality with a new theology for a new man.

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Niebuhr, op. cit., p. 212.

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Brandt, op. cit., p. 307.

CHAPTER VIII

THE KERYGMA IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

I. BARTH AND THE KERYGMA

Karl Barth is precise and firm in his stand on the centrality of "Word" for the life of that body which calls itself - the Church. The "Word" for Barth is God addressing man, and its ultimate form and content is Jesus Christ. It has been preserved for us in the sacred text, called the Holy Scripture which is the only record of Revelation available to man. Consequently, it is vital to the three forms of the Word of God which Barth has structured to help him deal with this complex concept.

The Bible itself is the written Word, the record of Revelation, i.e., the record which preserves God's total address to man conveyed by the mighty acts of God in history, which all together "speak" to man. Barth cautions us not to regard the Bible as Revelation itself, but rather to understand it as the witness to the Revelation expressed in human terms, and that Jesus Christ himself is the Revelation.¹

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Karl Barth, The Preaching of the Gospel, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), p. 64.

The preaching of the Church is the proclaimed Word. The proclamation flows from and is dependent upon the written Word. Barth says:

The preacher's task is to cause the testimony presented in the text to be heard; his preaching is good if it brings to life in this present age the testimony of the prophets and apostles.²

Thus it is apparent that, for Barth, the Bible is truly authoritative for the Church and its mission which is to proclaim the Word in word and sacrament.

The Kerygma Proclaimed

Our basic task is to discover the "kerygma" in the preaching of Barth and Bultmann, thereby gaining some insight to its form and content as proclaimed in this time, the mid-twentieth century.

In speaking of the kerygma, Barth explains that if it is to be the good news proclaimed by a herald, who in the act of proclaiming fulfills his function, it must be controlled by the proper relationship between God and man. He describes this relationship as, "the exercise of sovereign power on the part of God and obedience on the part of man."³ What is it then that Barth preaches? We shall seek an answer to this question in three sermons

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Ibid.

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Ibid., p. 16.

taken from a collection of his sermons entitled
 "Deliverance to the Captives."⁴

Sermon Title: "You Will Live Also"

Text: John 14:19

Date: Easter Sunday, 1955

One would expect Barth's Easter sermons to be the finest and clearest expressions of the kerygma which proclaims the great news of the Christian faith - "He is Risen." And our expectation is fulfilled in this sermon. The kerygma is concisely expressed by Barth in terms of the response made by a man of faith to the proclamation of the living Lord, "I live." He says it this way:

Yes, you may live and because you live, I shall live also, I may and I can and I want to live! I for whom you, true God, became a true man - I for whom you died and rose again - I for whom you accomplished all and everything needed in time and eternity!⁵

This thought and the language Barth uses to express it is reminiscent of the primitive kerygma as we discovered it in Luke's writings, e.g., Acts 2:22-24 reads:

This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. But God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

⁴ Karl Barth, Deliverance to the Captives (New York: Harper Brothers, 1961).

⁵ Ibid., p. 33.

In the primitive kerygma, the resurrection of Christ was the crucial, saving work of God enabling the believer to understand that Jesus was truly the long awaited Messiah. So in Jesus, God fulfilled his promises made to the fathers, and the long awaited redemption of Israel was at hand. Now Barth says, "because you live, I shall live also;" and this message, though addressed to all mankind, is heard by individuals and understood to mean that through the resurrection of Jesus, something absolutely fantastic occurred in and for human life which now enables me, an individual, to "live".

Further, whatever this act was, it has already taken place absolutely and totally, so that everything needed by man to "live" has been provided him in the death and resurrection of Jesus. And this proclamation we will hear again and again from Barth. For example:

You have been saved! We are not told: you may be saved sometimes, or a little bit. No, you have been saved, totally and for all times. You? Yes, we! Not just any other people, more pious and better than we are, no, we, each one of us.⁶

And this is the power of the relationship: what is true and valid in heaven, what Jesus Christ has done for us, what has been accomplished by him, man's redemption, justification and preservation, is true and valid on earth.⁷

Barth speaks directly to the quality of the life

⁶
Ibid., p. 37.

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Ibid., p. 49.

which is to be lived by man as saved man when he identifies⁸ Jesus as "the one who lives from God's mercy alone;" and when he explains the expected results of the work of Jesus, "that you may be born again in me to new beings who, in hope give God glory and stop seeking your own. That you⁹ may grow in me into men with whom God is well pleased." Clearly then, "life" means to live the true life which Jesus lives; that our human life when lived from God's mercy alone is pleasing to God, since we glorify Him as Jesus did when he went to the cross in obedience and trust. But how do we live this true human life?

Like a man stranded alone in a small boat in the middle of a vast empty sea, beholding a large ocean liner approaching him, then slowing to a stop, and hearing the word proclaimed from the bridge to him "come aboard," so Barth says all we can do is to accept the saving word. Our word of salvation is Jesus Christ, the revealed word proclaimed in the preaching of the Church, and our response can only be an acceptance of "his gift of our journey into the future."¹⁰ Like the man in the boat all that man can do is to accept the saving word, for man cannot help himself; he cannot create life from within himself; he cannot acquire salvation by himself; rather all he can do

⁸
Ibid., p. 31.

⁹
Ibid.

¹⁰
Ibid., p. 32.

is to receive that which has already been accomplished for him, and which is being given to him.

Conceivably, the lost man in the boat could have rejected the saving word had he not been convinced that the liner was a part of reality and not an illusion. In believing that it was real, he tested or trusted his belief or faith by leaving the relative security of the small boat to which he had clung for life. To participate in the human life that Jesus lives, to hear the saving Word and accept it as reality is the meaning of faith: a faith to be trusted in action.

Sermon Title: "Saved by Grace"

Text: Ephesians 2:5

Date: August 14, 1955

Again we discover the kerygma proclaimed by Barth in terms of its central message of salvation:

You have been saved, totally and for all times..... This is so because Jesus Christ is our brother and, through his life and death, has become our Saviour who has¹¹wrought our salvation. He is the word of God for us.

Here we note a shift in the wording of the kerygma; a shift from the resurrection to the death of Jesus as the central focus of the saving work of Christ. Barth concludes this sermon with the kerygma stated in these

¹¹

Ibid., p. 37, 38.

terms: "that Jesus Christ died for us to set us free, that by the grace, in him, we have been saved."¹² Here Barth preaches salvation interpreted as freedom. This freedom for man was purchased for a price. It was the suffering and death of Jesus upon the cross which resulted from his living the true human life out of mercy alone, in full obedience to the will of God.

The kerygma, then, for Barth, proclaims the work accomplished; that Jesus Christ suffering and dying on the cross was accused, sentenced and punished for our sake and in our place, and because this is so, we are saved. "Our sin has no longer any power over us. Our prison door is open. Our suffering has come to an end... He sets us free. When he, the Son of God, set us free, we are truly free."¹³

Now Barth understands true freedom to mean freedom to love God. As such, freedom is not concerned with man's ability to choose between right or wrong; rather we are free, truly free, when we are free to love God. And this is another way of describing the quality of true human life which comes from hearing, accepting and believing the saving word of God. Only as man lives from the mercy of God, trusting in his grace, is he free to love God; and to love God means to trust in and act upon

¹²Ibid., p. 41.¹³Ibid., p. 39.

faith. Freedom means human life lived as eternal life - a life lived in Christ.

In this last sermon which we will study Barth continues his exposition of the kerygma of "life" as he preaches from the Pauline text, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

Sermon Title: "Death - But Life"

Test: Romans 6:23

Date: Easter Sunday, 1959

The kerygma again finds forceful expression in this sermon as Barth now interprets both elements of the kerygma i.e., the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ as sharing equally in the saving task. He says that because Jesus Christ was willing -

To make our history his own;
To take our sin upon himself as though he
himself had committed it;
To pocket the wages of sin in our behalf;
therefore,

He suffered,
was crucified, ¹⁴
died and was buried.

But,
he, Jesus Christ was raised from the dead and
recalled from the tomb by the Father.

¹⁵
He was robed in eternal life.

¹⁴
Ibid., p. 147.

¹⁵
Ibid., p. 149.

In his death he freed us from paying the price for our sin and our death; in his resurrection he shares the free gift of eternal life with us. "His story now becomes ours, just as before ours became his",¹⁶ a free gift from God, human life experienced as eternal life. How much this sounds like Augustine's illustration of the "two tables".¹⁷

The Kerygma Explained

We have found Karl Barth proclaiming the word of God as revealed in Jesus Christ as preserved in Holy Scripture without apology or proof. He presupposes the authority of the Bible and understands the function of the preacher to be a herald, proclaiming that which has been accomplished. He does his work as preacher with conviction and power.

But can the kerygma expressed in traditional Biblical language, i.e., suffering, crucifixion, tomb, resurrection, eternal life, sin and death really convict its hearer? Barth says, "The only thing that counts is to make the word of God heard. And it is not possible to know what happens at that point, because the effect produced by the Word depends in God. So we leave it in his hands, trusting in him and in what he has done".¹⁸

¹⁶

Ibid.

¹⁷

Cf., Supra, p. 88.

¹⁸

Barth, The Preaching of the Gospel, p. 37.

However, it is certain that Barth knows precisely what the kerygma should be saying to his listeners, and for insight to his thought we must turn to his theology. What is different or unique about the Christian kerygma? What does he really mean by "human life experienced as eternal life in his undeserved and free gift, his gift of grace"?¹⁹

Barth has not depreciated understanding of humanity as such, but rather decries those within the Christian faith who speak of man as totally worthless in order that God and the power of his grace may seem to be so much higher. This is a false and degrading stance to take, and in fact really undercuts the majesty and sovereignty of God.²⁰ So Barth understands the creaturely essence of man, i.e., human nature to be such that by nature he is determined for his fellow man, to be with him "gladly". This he calls the "secret of humanity", which cannot be destroyed or essentially changed; because this is so, "sin is always an inconceivable revolt, and never loses the character of a crime, or becomes a kind of second natural state which is excusable as such".²¹

¹⁹

Barth, Deliverance to the Captives, p. 148.

²⁰

Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics (Edinburgh: Clark, 1960), III/2, 274, 275.

²¹

Ibid.

And so it is that man's natural freedom of the heart for his fellow man comes under the power of sin, because it is unstable and open to corruption and disillusionment. Barth says that "highly unnaturally and artificially, we²² pervert the 'gladly' into a 'reluctantly'" thereby distorting and misusing that freedom to love which is of our very nature. More directly in a sermon he expresses this same thought, "God, has put the house in order even though, strangely enough, we prefer to mess it up all over again".²³

The "newness" conveyed to man, in his actual condition of human life, by the Christian faith-event, the kerygma, is to be identified simply as Christian love. Barth says:

Love is the life of those who after the fall are restored by the grace of God, and as such a life which cannot be destroyed again, and is not threatened even by death and the end of the world.²⁴

This then is human life experienced as eternal life; humanity as such awakened, stabilized, fulfilled, so that the "secret" is truly revealed and made manifest in the "co-existence" of man and fellow man 'gladly' fulfilled in

²²

Barth, Dogmatics, III/2, 281.

²³

Barth, Deliverance to the Captives, p. 39.

²⁴

Barth, Dogmatics, III/2, 276.

freedom".²⁵

And for Barth, the kerygma informs us that only God can bridge the chasm which exists between humanity and Christian love. This awareness or knowledge comes to man as an individual in his encounter with Jesus of Nazareth in his total dependence upon God's mercy, willing to do God's will in perfect obedience, and in so doing manifesting the love of God to all men who hear the Word.

Thus Barth sees man coming to life, becoming his true self when he knows the love of God.

For love alone - the love in which there is an awakening and positive fulfillment of humanity, and the Christian is displayed and revealed as real man - is the fulfillment of the Law, because this human and therefore Christian love, the love which includes humanity, is the life of man in the power of the new and saving divine Yes to the creature. This is the connection between humanity and Christian love.²⁶

And this love is revealed to us in Jesus Christ on the Cross - a free gift from God to all mankind, if he but receive it - human life experienced as eternal life.

²⁵ Ibid., III/2, 282.

²⁶ Ibid.

II. BULTMANN AND THE KERYGMA

The Existential Kerygma

Perhaps more than any other twentieth century Christian theologian, Rudolf Bultmann is responsible for directing the attention of the entire theological community to the centrality and essentiality of the Christian kerygma for the life of the Church. His bold move to 'demythologize' the New Testament message of salvation, thereby releasing the kerygma from an untenable and obsolete mythical structure of reality, has inspired a dynamic and spirited controversy within the Christian community.

He maintains that the kerygma must be demythologized in order that it can remain the kerygma, i.e., the proclamation of the decisive act of God in Christ which²⁷ has wrought man's salvation, but proclaimed in such a way that modern man may hear and understand it. Bultmann has selected the language and concepts of existentialism as his vehicle for communicating the kerygma to our particular time in history. He understands the kerygma as a divine word addressed to men "which sets before us a

²⁷
Rudolf Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology",
Kerygma and Myth (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1961),
p. 13, 14.

responsibility of human existence for which we are
²⁸
 summoned to decide."

This decision involves a choice between authentic and inauthentic existence, a decision for God or for the "world", a decision for the world of spirit or grace as opposed to the world of things. It is really a decision for life or for death; it is the "summons to men for a decision of faith, whereby they die to the world in order to live by the unseen reality of God."²⁹ But let us now turn to the preaching of Bultmann for insight to this corporate act of the Church wherein, according to Bultmann, man meets the crucified and risen Lord.³⁰

Sermon Text: John 16:5-15

Date: May 15, 1938

Judgment, victory, and discipleship are constitutive of the kerygma for Bultmann as he carefully develops and builds a sermon which presents itself as a unity so that it is difficult to find within it the core of the kerygma as a crowning statement concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is quite clear that

²⁸

John MacQuarrie, Twentieth-Century Religious Thought (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 363.

²⁹

Ibid., p. 364.

³⁰

Bultmann, op. cit., p. 41.

Bultmann has indeed translated the kerygma, presenting it to us in new terms. He says:

For Jesus is not a teacher and leader of humanity towards new ideals and goals. His word spells a radical challenge to the world's very existence and way of life..... Thus Jesus does not move in the world as belonging to it, but he confronts it as the One who wills to save it from the illusion of its self-sufficiency and one who for that reason must be its accuser.³¹

Here Bultmann sets the limits of the work or mission of Jesus in terms of revealing to man what is his true existence, i.e., what reality really is. He does this by standing over against the pretense, falseness, and illusion concerning reality which has held man in bondage to the world. Bultmann uses the word "world" in a specific, technical sense, namely, the peculiar domination which the created world, God's world, the world of possibilities, gifts and tasks "can achieve and exercise over the minds of men."³² This domination which Bultmann also calls, "the prince of this world,"³³ is an illusion, a non-reality which man accepts as reality and which draws him to find his security, fulfillment, self-sufficiency from this world of things, i.e., the visible world.

³¹ Rudolf Bultmann, This World and the Beyond (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), p. 61.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

Here Bultmann seems to be saying the same thing that Barth has explicated in his concept of "Das Nichtige" which also draws man into choosing the impossible possibility. Further, Bultmann tells us that the universality of this "power" which threatens all mankind is such that it enslaves "men in good as well as in evil, in the pedestrian work of every day as in the most exalted strivings, in pleasures as in struggles to attain the highest ends."³⁴

How then does God accomplish the redemption of man from this enslavement to the "prince of this world"? The answer lies in the kerygma, and we find Bultmann proclaiming it in this manner:

Jesus' failure in the visible sphere, His death and His departure from the world is His victory! He has overcome the world, and His death is the very confirmation and seal of his work which was to confront the world with God's challenge to it. Had He belonged to the world, then the world, which loves its own (John 15:19) would gladly have welcomed him.³⁵

Thus we find the kerygma centered in the death of Jesus - rejected and condemned by the "world" as alien to its self-understanding and its security, and in this act the "world" unwittingly and unknowingly confirms his

³⁴
Ibid.

³⁵
Ibid., p. 67.

holiness and glorification as the Son of God. God's challenge in the person of Jesus Christ comes to the world, as judgment for its sin of unbelief which is its claim to be inherently powerful and self-sufficient, thus denying its need and dependence upon the divine grace which flows from the holiness of God.³⁶

The man Jesus in understanding his existence as life lived in the fullness of God's grace did not succumb to the world, and thereby he achieved his victory and brought God's judgment into and upon the world. This is the testimony of his disciples which is embodied in the Easter event.

So Bultmann lays great stress on this "testimony", the word of Jesus which is proclaimed to the world, through which man can meet the risen Lord and follow him as a disciple. And this "means necessarily and always a real sharing of His fate,"³⁷ for the "world" loves only its own. It is the discipleship of Jesus in the form of the Church which carries this judging and saving word of Jesus to men, and "the power of the world is broken as a result of the fact that the word of Jesus, i.e., the

³⁶

Ibid.

³⁷

Ibid., p. 60.

kerygma is proclaimed in it again and again and again which endows weak men with the power to resist the world."³⁸

So it is that man allied with the Lord decides for authentic existence trusting and dependent upon the grace of God as ultimate reality as over and against the world "which fondly imagines that it is a closed circle, complete in itself, which supposes that it is responsible only to itself, and which subjects to its unconditional claim all that belongs to it".³⁹ And so the kerygma opens up the possibility for all who hear it of a life of authentic existence when life is lived from the mercy of God.

The Call To Decision

Sermon Text: Phillippians 3:7-14

Date: June 27, 1937

In this sermon Bultmann again challenges his hearers for decision - the decision to live by grace as a disciple of Christ or in bondage to the old man Adam. He carefully prepares the way for the proclamation of the kerygma by

³⁸

Ibid., p. 69

³⁹

Ibid., p. 68.

explaining Paul's experience of faith in terms of freedom from the past, which is freedom from being in Adam, and his being open to the future with all its boundless possibilities. This event or crisis in a man's life which so radically reorients him for the future is a gift from God, a gift of grace, and it has been made possible through the work of Jesus in revealing to man the sovereignty of the world of the spirit over the world of things.

Bultmann says about Paul:

...the experience which shattered his sense of self-security, which tore him apart from all that he called his own, bringing a great unrest into his life and yet freeing him from the fetters of self, the crisis in his past which liberated him from the dead weight of the past and set him free to look forward to the boundless horizons of the future.⁴⁰

Thus this gift which frees man is defined in terms of existence, of living in a certain way. Really, like Barth's concept of freedom, it means to love God or to live dependent upon the grace of God. And its purpose according to Bultmann is "to make us more mature and capable for the carrying out of future tasks."⁴¹ which he explains as follows:

1. to be inspired with courage and strength to meet

⁴⁰

Ibid., p. 52.

⁴¹

Ibid., p. 53.

what the future holds, to fill us with aspiration to live a nobler and purer life; and

2. to make us ready both for action and sacrifice, which can only be maintained and come to good effect if it implies readiness to live by the gift of grace, to allow His grace, to allow Him to act upon us and within us, as He wills; and
3. this means readiness to abandon ourselves as it were to that void in which there is no support and no security, in which we are held only by the grip of Him who in our recent past has thrust with power and grace into our lives.⁴²

For Bultmann this is what the kerygma proclaims, that the sphere of the invisible is the only true reality for man to base his life upon; and our response to it, yes or no in each moment of decision determines our freedom to live gracefully into the future or not. That this is a shattering experience is clear to Bultmann as he interprets Paul's life, for the domination of the world is tight and powerful, and the old man Adam has become accustomed to his bonds. In this context he proclaims the kerygma in these words:

In this very situation allow yourself to be shattered by Him so that you may experience the power of His resurrection. Try in these circumstances to feel the power of His word: "My grace is sufficient for you; for my power is made perfect in weakness."⁴³

It is so - the kerygma proclaims reality as it is, and its power rests not in its intellectual message but

⁴²

Ibid.

⁴³

Ibid., p. 54-55.

in what it points to. There is nothing for us to do except "to allow". Nothing to conjure up out of our own resources, no body of dogma to affirm, no special works to do, for we simply cannot find our salvation in this world of visible. To meet the risen Lord in the preaching of the Church is to "experience not only the power of His resurrection, but also the fellowship of His sufferings."⁴⁴

Thus the language used by Bultmann is based upon the concepts of existence: experience, feeling, fellowship, suffering, life, freedom, future, all brought together in such a way as to carry the message of the saving act of God in Christ - the kerygma. Further, it does not even suggest, let alone depend upon the necessity of first accepting the resurrection of Jesus as an historical event, before the experience of encountering the risen Lord is possible.

Sermon Text: II Cor. 4:6-11

Date: June 17, 1945

In this sermon, delivered some eight years after the one above, Bultmann remains faithful to his major theme of preaching the kerygma in terms of existence. In fact, it could have been a continuation of the previous

⁴⁴

Ibid., p. 56.

sermon as he opens with Paul's awareness of his living in two worlds, the visible world of change, decay, tears and death where we are afflicted and perplexed, and the invisible world of the spirit, of grace, where there is no fear and no despair.⁴⁵ These two worlds do not stand along side of each other in the sense that you move back and forth between them, rather the invisible world of the spirit saturates the visible world so that strength, power, insight can be derived from the invisible world in order to "master all those pains and trials which flow from the visible and temporal."⁴⁶

Bultmann explains this further when he asks the question, "Are not all their thoughts and abilities so fully claimed and absorbed by the effort to secure the barest necessities of life that no time or power is left to live in the world of the spirit?" He answers by affirming that there is no special time or ability required to live the interior life of the spirit.⁴⁷ The two worlds are at one and the same time, separate and distinct yet they are inseparable. And upon this note he again proclaims the kerygma in terms of existence as follows:

⁴⁵

Ibid., p. 212.

⁴⁶

Ibid.

⁴⁷

Ibid., p. 219.

This dying of Christ is repeated wherever a man understands that his suffering is meant to serve the purpose of reminding him that this present world is provisional only and ultimately doomed to destruction, and the resurrection life of Christ is actualized wherever man takes up the cross of Christ, which means that he refuses to cling to this worldly realities, that he lets them slide in order that God may bestow upon him the life of the transcendent world of the Spirit.⁴⁸

Thus it is that by our becoming wholly abandoned to the self-bestowing grace of God we are able to experience human life as eternal life which is the only authentic existence for man. We are under the demand for decision, for God or for the world, each time we meet the risen Lord in the preaching of the Church. This is the kerygma as Bultmann preaches it.

III. BARTH AND BULTMANN IN DIALOGUE

The Kerygma - A Proclamation About Reality

Someone once said, "A rose by any other name is still a rose". Implied in this statement is a hermeneutical principle, for the kerygma, if it is the message of reality, can be transmitted, proclaimed, taught in and through many different languages and thought-forms. Reality is and it is one - be it called a rose or not. There it is: it looks like a rose, smells

⁴⁸

Ibid., p. 220.

like a rose, grows like a rose, pricks like a rose, it surely must be a rose. And so it is with the kerygma as preached by Barth and Bultmann, one couched in Biblical language and the other in the language of existentialism, yet one hears the same message concerning reality. And that message is a proclamation about reality as revealed to man by God in his decisive act in Jesus Christ which says loud and clear that for man to be the man he was created to be -- for man to be fulfilled, for man to live a manly life, one which he has failed to live since creation.-- then he must be open, aware, sensitive, knowledgeable about reality as it really is: namely, that the visible world is absolutely dependent upon the invisible world for its existence and fulfillment, and man as part of this visible world is to live fully dependent upon the grace of God. In Bultmann's terms, this means "a life based on unseen, intangible realities,"⁴⁹ and for Barth, "human life experienced as eternal life."⁵⁰

Here we can gain insight from Paul, "...the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21). Salvation, as freedom to love God, to live

⁴⁹

Bultmann, "New Testament", p. 19.

⁵⁰

Barth, "Deliverance to the Captives", p. 148.

with the awareness that the visible world is fully dependent upon the invisible, this is reality according to the Christian proclamation, and as both Barth and Bultmann proclaim it.

Yet, this conclusion regarding the preaching of Barth and Bultmann presents us a basic philosophic question which we cannot ignore. Is it existence which includes our language and thought-forms that determines reality, or is reality prior to its being experienced?

Being or Existence

The Christian theologian, when he affirms the classic Christian doctrine of creation, creatio ex nihilo, seemingly must take his stand with the ontological group for in so doing he affirms God, as ultimate reality, being prior to the visible world of nature, standing over and against his creation. Now Barth takes his position here with a strong determination to defend the sovereignty and being of God as fundamental and absolute for Christian theology.

Bultmann on the other hand states forthrightly his adoption of Heidegger's philosophical system as a structure upon which he builds his theology. It is now understandable why Barth questions Bultmann's doctrine of God, for in fact how can God be sovereign and independent

of His creation if reality is a function of existence, becoming, or the moment. And for Barth there is no possibility for the gospel unless we know "the transcendence in our midst."⁵¹

If Bultmann takes existentialism seriously, and he says he does,⁵² then it would seem that the authentic life lived out of the invisible world is not a life dependent upon the priority of God's grace already present, independent of man, but rather it comes into existence at the same moment that man makes his "authentic" decision. Obviously then, God depends in some fashion at least for his existence or reality upon the creature, which is an absurd statement for a Christian theologian holding an absolute conviction of God's sovereignty to even consider.

Thus, if there is any basis for the conclusion that Barth and Bultmann are really saying the same thing in their preaching, each would have had to move away from any absolute interpretation of the "either/or" question. This possibility then points to the necessity of re-examining the key word "or" in the philosophic question.

51

Quoted by Prof. Arnold Come in lecture 12-7-64 at Claremont, Calif.

52

Bultmann, "New Testament", p. 15.

Conclusion

Bultmann in replying to his critics says, "...we inevitably ask whether divine activity has any objective reality at all. Does it exist apart from our own subjective experience? Is not faith reduced to experience pure and simple? Is God no more than an experience in the soul, despite the fact that faith only makes sense when it is directed towards a God with a real existence outside the believer"?⁵³ He believes that this objection rests upon a psychological misconception of what is meant by the existential life of man, i.e., if faith and experience are spoken of or interpreted purely in a psychological sense. Rather Bultmann says:

When we say that faith alone, the faith which is aware of the divine encounter, can speak of God, and that therefore when the believer speaks of an act of God he is ipso facto speaking of himself as well, it by no means follows that God has no real existence apart from the believer or the act of believing.⁵⁴

Accordingly, we must understand Bultmann to be saying that reality in its absolute fullness, in its unity which includes God as ultimate reality manifested by his grace is apart from, yet intimately associated with

⁵³

Ibid., p. 199.

⁵⁴

Ibid.

His creation. Now Barth seems to agree with Bultmann on this vital point for he clearly identifies God with reality as we are capable of knowing it, and that as far as man is concerned God and creation are inseparable. So Barth says:

God gave Himself to the world in coming to the world as its Reconciler....He does not change in giving Himself. He simply activates and reveals Himself ad extra, in the world. He is in and for the world what He is in and for Himself.⁵⁵

So here too we find an understanding of reality which includes God in his separateness, i.e., in Himself and in the world, always remaining what He is. Therefore, can we now qualify the "or" in the philosophical question to include an understanding of reality determined not by "being" essentially, nor by "existence" essentially, but rather by a mutuality of the invisible and the visible, of God and the creation which is inseparable and one. And as man lives by the Spirit, so must he then walk by the Spirit (Gal. 5:25) for in so doing the invisible is made manifest to the visible as authentic existence. And the kerygma is the kerygma when it proclaims this reality, whatever the language, vehicle or thought-form may be.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

This has been a journey, a pilgrimage across the spiritual and intellectual history of Christendom. Its purpose was to arrive here in our present time with a place to stand upon from which the movement ahead might be undertaken. We have endeavored to locate and to understand the central saving message of the Christian religion as it was spoken by men of faith in significant periods in Christianity's history. We have sought insight to the challenge of the spiritual reality which has confronted man as he has struggled to live in an objective, materialistic world.

In so doing, it was our hope to discover what the Christian kerygma, the good news which is to be proclaimed to all men concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, could really mean to twentieth-century secular man. Further, to discover if it is possible to preach the kerygma with conviction and meaning here in our time. I advance a tentative, hopeful, "yes", to this question and hasten to explain my understanding of this answer.

The Changing Kerygma

We have traced the kerygma through the Christian era,

from its inception in Palestine in the first-century to our present age, and to grasp the movement and development of this basic Christian proclamation, we have abstracted below the core concept from each period.

1. The primitive kerygma
in Palestine.

The crucifixion - resurrection of Jesus Christ, i.e., the Christ-event was the work of Yahweh acting to redeem his people according to His promise made to the Fathers. He sent Jesus Christ as Messiah to fulfill His promise and to make His presence and concern known to His people.

2. The primitive kerygma
in Paul.

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the ground for faith in him as Lord. In his death, redemption from man's prior sins is accomplished; in his resurrection the believer comes to know and understand himself as subject in radical obedience to the reigning Lord, Jesus Christ.

3. The passover kerygma

The Christ-event is described and understood in terms of the Jewish Passover myth: the crucifixion of Jesus is understood as the sacrifice of the true Paschal Lamb, and the deliverance from Egypt corresponds to the deliverance of the Christian from the bondage and lordship of sin. The resurrection of Jesus is the sign or the seal by God that sin and death have been defeated, and the experience of deliverance is known in the presence of the living Lord.

4. The kerygma in the second-century Church.

The Christ-event is understood in terms of the pre-existent divine Lord who took on the flesh of mortal man knowing that physical death was inevitable, hence the suffering and passion of Christ is central, but in accomplishing his work, His Spirit overwhelms and redeems the mortal flesh of man. Thus man can participate in the divine, eternal life of Christ. The Christ-event is, therefore, cosmic in nature and scope, for the future of man has been radically changed.

5. The kerygma in the orthodox Church.

Ambrose and Augustine both understood man to be a joining together of mortal body and immortal soul. The Christ-event signifies the victory of righteousness over sin and death for Jesus Christ, in dying, killed death and gave to man eternal life which will eventually be lived in another world and age. Christ took on death and gave us life in a most gracious exchange.

6. The kerygma in the Reformation.

The Christ-event for Luther proclaimed the absolute victory of Christ over the power of sin to kill mankind for eternity. It is Christ and his righteousness alone which is adequate to overwhelm the sin of mankind, and it became available for man's justification through God's free gift of faith. By faith man enters the covenant of Baptism, and by faith remains in the covenant while living his life in this world, so that he might die in grace in order

in order to share in the eternal life which Christ lives.

7. The kerygma in the Enlightenment.

Schleiermacher understands the total work accomplished by God's saving act in the Christ-event to include in Christ's crucifixion, ^{redemption} from sin, and in Christ's resurrection, justification before God. By faith man receives the gift of the life-giving Spirit which means living in the reality of the Kingdom of God: a spiritual reality constituted in the hearts of men, here and now in this world. Thus the kerygma proclaims the reality of a new life available to man to be lived here in this temporal existence, but which has the quality of being eternal, for it is like the life the living Lord lives.

8. The kerygma in the Twentieth-Century.

The Christ-event for both Barth and Bultmann is the supreme revelation of God to man about all of reality; that the world of the concrete, the visible, is not autonomous and independent but dependent upon the mercy, the love, and the spiritual reality of God. Thus the free gift of God to man, which is his mercy and grace, enables man to know himself as a man, i.e., to be a man means to live out of God's grace freely, and to be free to love God and fellow man.

The Kerygma-A Proclamation about Reality.

In comparing the above basic kerygmatic concepts, we

find that all are an expression of what reality in its fullness, or in its ultimacy, really is. Thus, they all carry within them presuppositions concerning the nature of man and the world. Consequently, man's expression, through ritual and doctrine, of his religious beliefs are limited by and informed by his world-view.

The kerygma, from the second century through the Reformation, clearly proclaims the reality of another realm of the supernatural, where man may continue his life eternally with God. Prior to this period, the kerygma proclaimed and expected the radical reordering and restructuring of reality by means of a cosmic event. From the enlightenment to the present, the kerygma has reflected man's openness and search for a scientific and rational grasp of reality, as it is given to him in all of existence.

The critical time for the radical revision in man's world-view started with Copernicus, and the printing of his revolutionary work, De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium, in 1543 in which he established in theory that the earth, being a sphere, rotates on its axis, and in addition, revolves in an orbit around the sun with the other planets. From that time on, man has opened his vision and intellect to reality in all of its mystery and immensity, and in so doing, has demolished all prior world-views as being illusory and not real. But of utmost importance to our study is to realize that though Augustine and Luther, for example, were looking

at their world of reality with limited and distorted vision, what they did see, actually and really, constituted reality for them.

Thus it is, that from the time of Schleiermacher, reality has a givenness to man of being a unity, and therefore, the reality which is God, must of necessity be directly involved and related to the concrete and visible world of reality in which we live. And if this is the case, then reality as given to us must be good and harmonious and appropriate for man's life and purpose. Accordingly, the necessity of escape from this "evil" world, which is a strong element contained within the kerygma as proclaimed through the Reformation, no longer makes much sense. Further, the abolishment of the "three-story universe" by Copernicus, at the same time effectively destroyed the spatial concept of heaven and hell.

Accordingly, our twentieth-century kerygma calls man to see reality as a unity, and as it is given, but to see that all that is visible is absolutely dependent upon the invisible, divine, spiritual, ultimate reality which we call God. To do this, i.e., to see reality in its fullness, is the act of faithful living. Thus the positive response to the kerygma is faith: Christian faith which enables the Christian to live a trusting life intimately with reality. Schleiermacher helps us to understand this response to the reality and grace of God with these words:

Therefore let us have no anxiety, the circle of those who recognize this life will always be widening, just because they are beginning to share in it. And as soon as even the slightest premonition of it arises in a man's soul, as soon as he has come only so far as to be no longer pleased and satisfied with the perishing and evil things of the world, as soon as his soul absorbs even the first ray of heavenly light; then his eyes are opened; so that he recognizes life, and becomes aware what a difference life is to serve righteousness, from living in the service of sin.¹

Recognition, not compulsion or coercion is the way to life according to Schleiermacher. It is reality. But what happened to this quality of living in Germany, where such an outstanding spokesman for Christianity could preach and explicate the Gospel of life with power and conviction? Is this life so fragile as to be snuffed out, or bound tight by the forces of the world, such as nationalism which Schleiermacher also proclaimed with enthusiasm and spirit; and being confined, must be set free in every generation? So Bultmann's analysis of reality as visible and invisible, with the visible world always contending, always seeking to destroy the invisible, as it did when it killed Jesus of Nazareth, would attest to this possibility. The decision for God or the world must ever be made anew by man who must make choices, would be Bultmann's conviction.

1

Friedrich Ernst Schleiermacher, Selected Sermons (New York: Funk & Wagnells, n.d.), p. 275.

The Kerygma for Today

Are there signs today that the life which is the life Jesus, the Christ, lives is breaking out of its prison anew? Yes, they are dramatically and vitally present in the dynamic movement for civil rights within the United States today, perhaps focused and symbolized by the death of a white man and a white woman in March of 1965, as they witnessed to the reality of such a life in Selma, Alabama by giving up their "This-worldly" life. An old man is dying, a new man is being born in the life to be lived by the Negro minority of our country. Too provincial, too narrow, too pat; hardly, when the religious faith of a vast segment of the world's population stems from the life of an itinerant preacher from a miserable little defeated country of the Mediterranean world.

So this is the shape and the content of the kerygma for our time and place: man himself, ignorant and menial, intellectual and well-to-do, healthy and sick, is worth dying for, that he might experience the quality of living which can be lived here and now, in this world, which Christ lives. And this life today is described in terms of brotherhood, equality, justice, personhood, dignity, accepted as we are. A quality of life to be lived here in history, which is God's history.

Is this not the Kerygma, even in traditional terms:

that man, sinful man, is worth dying for, even to the point that God himself died that man might live? And every time man dies for his fellow man, God dies again. More than that, when man suffers, God suffers; when man dies, God dies, and He knows it and He remembers it.

Specifically then, the kerygma for our time takes its shape in terms of a new challenge to the world's self-understanding and sovereignty as a status-quo structure. Within the world's reality, man, all of mankind, is to have the opportunity to live as man with dignity and appreciation for what he is, the creature who is intimately related to all of reality, God and the world. As such, his destiny is to live the quality of life here and now appropriate to such a creature, and which is signified by all we can say poetically and mythologically concerning the life lived by the resurrected Christ.

How may the kerygma be preached today in concrete terms? First, the struggle for civil rights today in our country is one mode or vehicle whereby God in His spiritual and invisible reality is breaking through anew into the consciousness of the visible segment of reality, manifesting His will and His presence in the conviction and faith of both white and black people, that there is in reality a value worth dying for; and further, that this value is spiritual in nature, directly related to the quality of life which man is to live here in this world. The quality

of life which is to be lived is one of dignity, freedom, and appreciation of each man as man living in brotherhood with his fellow man. It is to be the kind of life Christ lives, temporal life lived as eternal life in this the visible world of reality, fully dependent upon and trusting in the invisible world of reality which is God.

But the question can be asked, "Is not the civil rights movement in our country simply a struggle within our social structure, an American problem, which is taking place fully within the boundaries of the objective or visible world of reality?" The negative answer which I make is a faith-statement, but when the basic issue involved in the movement transcends the movement itself, and is applicable and relevant to mankind everywhere, then at least the faith-statement can be proclaimed with power and authority. So the issue of Man's personhood, which is so obviously the central point of the movement; namely, is a negro really a man, is translated into the broader issue, is man a man or is he an object? Does a husband see his wife as a person, or an object? Does he project upon her a structure of personality alien to her real person or self? Do parents prevent their children from becoming men by structuring a pseudo existence and identity for them? Do social orders establish the nature of men erroneously, based on self-interest, pride and ignorance? Of course this happens, and is happening on

a broad scale in our world today; and the saving message of Jesus Christ is that man is man, to be himself in relationship with his fellow man gladly, to live perhaps the only life he has to live here and now in this world. And the kerygma proclaiming this life, made possible through the death of the Saviour, is to be heard again and again.

A View of Reality

Yet, there remains the nagging question of how we explain our experience of reality. It must be thought about and understood in some structure of our reason, else we are not standing firmly with feet on that "piece of ground" we are seeking, open to new truths and insights which can correct and strengthen our witness of faith. It is my conviction, that such an expression can best be made, and perhaps may only be made, in an art form. Thus, it is that the Christian kerygma finds its expression in a mythic-poetic form in both prose and ritual - prose in the Gospels and ritual in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. Accordingly, I have written in poetic form my deepest understanding of the meaning of reality in terms of the relationship between God, man, and the visible world of creation.

Man, what is man?

A creature destined to remain always
at the crossroads of reality;

Created to be the crossroads
of reality?

He is the one - the incarnation - the
two in one,
Creator and Creation.

He is the boundary line - separating
the two -

Creator from Creation,
spiritual from material,
God from the world.

Thus he is intimate with both - knows
both - trusts both - unifies both.

Two worlds of reality, yet one in man.

How can this be? God is God.

Before all creatures, things, and stuff,

He alone is God. There is no other.

God needs not man - how can we limit Him?

Yet, this is what we say.

Ah! but he freely chose to limit Himself
when he created man. Not so - God is God.

Yet! He is not visible here in the creation

Five senses cannot seek Him out.

Were there not man - would there be not God?

Foolish, foolish, foolish.

God is here and there and everywhere -

Here, there and everywhere -- where there
is man.

Man, the boundary line of reality -

a little less than the Creator -

a little more than the Creation;
Man, Creator and creation - one.

So be it.

The Reality of Immortal Life

We have noted the dilemma which has persisted throughout this study between "this" life and "that" life, life here in this world or life in a supernatural world, the "already" and the "not yet", and accordingly we must deal with this question of the possibility of life beyond the grave. We have discovered that the promise of eternal life, either through the resurrection of the body or the immortality of the soul, or both together, is the sum and substance of the meaning of salvation as proclaimed by the historical and traditional Christian kerygma. In failing to talk about it, or proclaim this promise, or to reinterpret it, we may well risk undercutting Christianity, preventing the Word of God from being heard in our time.

Death has not been a popular subject for modern American Protestantism to deal with, and as a result we really don't know how to die. Luther was greatly concerned with helping his people to reach their earthly objective; namely, to die in grace. Jung accuses the Christian Church of failing its essential task of "teaching

people to die".² I am convinced that we have failed to deal creatively with death and the promise of a life beyond the grave, because we have failed to challenge and to destroy a primitive and long since obsolete structure of reality which is without power to confront people today and to communicate to them the truth about reality.

If a religious faith is to be vital, effective, to have substance, it must be grounded in reality. What can it possibly mean to speak of God's saving mercy and love which will provide a future life with Him in heaven, when secular man no longer understands the supernatural nor has any awareness of experiencing the quality of love which is proclaimed. For if the promise of a future life is to be believed, and being believed to affect the quality of living, now, then this promise must be grounded in reality, and that reality, as best we know it, affirms the impossibility of saying anything objective about a heavenly life to be lived after death.

What can we say concerning the Christian promise of eternal life, which traditionally is understood in terms of an everlasting continuation of the individual

² Carl G. Jung, The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche (New York: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1960), p. 399.

personality and identity in a perfect environment?

First, that the message of salvation, which has come down to us as a faith-statement about God's love for man, is a message of salvation concerned with and applicable to this life, as it is lived in this world. The kerygma is to be responded to and believed as it speaks creatively to man's existence in this world.

Secondly, if we understand the nature of man as the conjunction of two dimensions of reality, a joining of the invisible with the visible, then we must be open to the awareness that when man in his individuality experiences physical death, which in itself is the manifestation of his finiteness characteristic of the creation or the visible world of reality, then to the extent that the divine is intimately related with the physical, God too must die. To make sense of man as a creature who combines uniquely two worlds of reality, spiritual and material, into one unity, his mortality must be accepted with dignity and understanding. His death must be affirmed as proper and befitting his creaturehood and his place in reality.

Let us say forthrightly, that man in his individuality is both ultimately important and ultimately unimportant. He is both absolutely precious and essential, for he unites the invisible world of reality with the visible; and absolutely expendable in the total scheme of reality. Yet the reality, which we call God, is not simply the sum of all

the individual entities we call man, just as man is not the sum total of creation. Though individual man dies, and with him that particular individuation of God, yet God is not limited to or bound by the finiteness of the total of all living men, for He is God: infinite, therefore all encompassing yet distinct and separate from all that He encompasses.

Finally, as faithful man comes to know himself as man living this life in trust and dependence upon God, experiencing the love of God in and through his relationships with his fellow man, he can affirm in faith his trust in God for whatever lies in store for him when death overtakes him. For to live is to live intimately with all of reality, which of certainty includes death.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ, the myth of the resurrected Lord, tells us today that Jesus of Nazareth, so uniquely united the Creator with the Creation, the invisible with the visible, the spiritual with the material, that the whole of reality is revealed in his person and his work. The world killed him because it could not stand sharing its actuality with God, its Creator. It continues to kill those who seek to live the life he lived, but in so doing the kerygma again is heard and understood and believed. And the true reality which is of God and which is God, is revealed again to a new generation of man, and the life He lives is discovered anew to be the true life for man.

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